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Drums, Women, and Goddesses: Drumming and Gender in Iron Age II Israel

Paz, Sarit

Abstract: The numerous depictions of drumming – mainly figurines of female drum players as well as the Old Testament – indicate that the drum was a feminine instrument. The present study considers the gender-related contexts of drumming in Iron Age II Israel. Following a survey and analysis of the archaeological, biblical, and ethnographic data, the study ascertains a gender model characterizing this musical activity and its contexts in Israelite society. One facet of drumming by women, very pronounced in the archaeological record, but totally ignored by Scripture, was the fertility cult. The second facet of the women drummer tradition is reflected in both the archaeological record and the Hebrew Bible. Drumming in the framework of the "Victory Song" was a female tradition of popular (folk) character, which included drumming, song and dance. In contrast to the women drummers' tradition, the Canaanite Orchestra was specifically cultic in its function, and it comprised a number of different instruments, including the drum, played exclusively by men. The differences between the women drummers' traditions and that of the Canaanite Orchestra reflect social differences between male and female, public and domestic, official and unofficial. The women drummer figurines with which this study is concerned are a material reflection of these musical traditions and their implications. The drumming traditions, and the figurines depicting them, provide an expression in spirit and substance, of the daily tension between ideologies, lifestyles, and interests that shaped the lives of women in Iron Age Israel.

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Drums, Women, and Goddesses

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by
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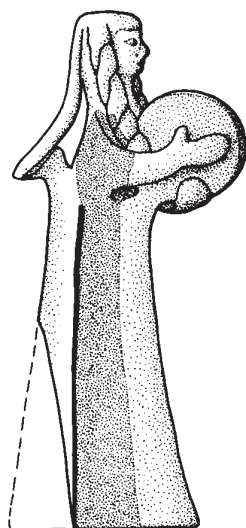
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Sarit Paz

Drums, Women, and Goddesses

Drumming and Gender
in Iron Age II Israel



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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Research Topic

In contrast to other ancient forms of art, whose vestiges include all the physical and aesthetic constituents, music – the most abstract – has bequeathed only partial remains. Music is produced by means of instruments, but few have survived, and their state of preservation is poor. And the fact that most early music was transmitted by oral tradition also makes its reconstruction very difficult. Even where notation has been found (e.g., in Mesopotamia), its decoding is problematic. The reconstruction of musical instruments on the basis of their depiction in ancient art, such as that attempted at the Haifa Museum of Music,¹ is also prone to differing interpretations.

However, apart from the occasional instruments which have survived, archaeological excavations have yielded numerous artefacts depicting musicians and their instruments. Although these cannot convey how the music sounded, they still possess considerable value. One can learn from them how the instruments were designed, how they were played, who the musicians were, and the settings in which they performed and when.

The instruments occurring in the archaeological record of Iron Age Israel include the small hand-drum. It mainly appears in pottery figurines of women musicians from Iron Age II. These finds aroused my interest owing to the consistent linkage between the drum and women.

The archaeological finds, in combination with other fields of research (to be specified below), allow us to examine the position of music in the ancient society of Israel. In view of the connexion between drums and women, this study is chiefly concerned with the gender-related aspects of drumming and with the significance of the figurines which depict this subject.

Although music-related artefacts occur in all of Israel's archaeological periods, I have chosen to concentrate on Iron Age II for a variety of reasons: First of all, its relative abundance of finds. Most are iconographic, but several different instruments have also been recovered from the excavations. Secondly, we have at our disposal documentary sources, most importantly the Old Testament, concerning this period. Finally, Iron Age II witnessed

1 For the catalogue of the archaeological finds and the reconstructed instruments in the exhibit, see Goral 1977.

numerous processes and changes – social, ethnic, religious, political, etc. – which found expression in the medium of music.

1.2. The Aims of this Study

This study considers the gender-related contexts of drumming in Iron Age II Israel. Following a survey and analysis of the archaeological, biblical, and ethnographic data at my disposal, I will try to ascertain the gender model characterising this musical activity in Israelite society during the period under review, the respective settings of drumming by women and by men, and the reasons for the differing traditions. For this purpose, I will examine the contexts and functions of music in general and of drumming in particular, both in daily life and in cultic-ritual circumstances, with specific reference to the identity of the musicians, their sex, and their status according to various criteria. The picture arising from the synthesis of the data will enable us to appreciate the significance of music as the reflection of a certain social reality and as a means of definition and alteration of gender boundaries in Israelite society. Special stress will be laid upon the function of drumming in the formation of socio-gender identity.

This discussion of the gender aspects of musical activity will facilitate the definition of other activities, both popular and cultic-ritual, which existed in the social framework. In the light of the conclusions on these themes, the implications of this study for the position of women in Iron Age II Israel will be considered.

I will propose an interpretation of the archaeological finds in which drumming is depicted, especially the various types of figurines depicting drum-playing women. Following the discussion of the definition and role of drumming, I will consider the significance and purpose of the figurines.

Since I would like to delineate a picture as wide and convincing as possible, I shall relate to Iron Age II Israel within its wider spatial and temporal contexts. I shall consider the connexions and reciprocal influences between Eretz-Israel and the other regions of the ancient Near East, such as Syria, Phoenicia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Cyprus, and the Aegean, in the domain of music and art. Iron Age II will be examined to its full chronological extent, facilitating the study of its continuities and interrelationships over time.

1.3. Archaeomusical Research in Eretz-Israel

Eretz-Israel has yielded numerous archaeological finds from its diverse periods relating to music. These include instruments discovered in excavations, as well as iconographic depictions of instruments and their players. These latter enable us to ascertain the settings in which the instruments appear,

the composition of the ensembles, the identity of the musicians, and the nature of the events involving musical activity. Instruments from proper excavations yielding clear archaeological contexts can also contribute to our understanding of their various uses.

Studies of the musical artefacts in the archaeology of Israel have hitherto been confined mainly to their purely musical aspects. Scholars have been interested in the identification of the instruments mentioned in the Old Testament, their reconstruction, and how they were played.

Until the 1960s the finds from Israel were ignored, and the writers related only to those from Mesopotamia and Egypt. In 1941, A.R. Sellers published his survey, *Musical Instruments of Israel* (Sellers 1941), but owing to the purported lack of finds here,² his discussion treated the instruments from Egypt and Mesopotamia *vis-à-vis* the biblical references, and in comparison with instruments in currency among the country's populace at the time of writing. Nevertheless, musical artefacts were already known from the sites of Israel, and some even appeared among the illustrations in the article. His study was reissued in 1961 in a reduced edition in which all the Israelite artefacts had been eliminated. In 1949, P. Gradenwitz published his book, *The Music of Israel* (Gradenwitz 1949). He also affirmed that there were no music-related finds from Israel prior to the Hellenistic period (Kraeling and Mowry 1957: 295).

In the 1960s and '70s, there accrued a relatively large corpus of such finds from Israel, and there were studies concerned with their musical classification (Bayer 1963). There were also attempts to reconstruct the instruments on the basis of their iconographic depiction and biblical descriptions (Gorali 1977).

A different kind of treatment is represented by the discussions of their iconographic depiction from the standpoint of artistic and musico-typological analysis. Examples include Batya Bayer's article, "The Finds That Could Not Be" (Bayer 1982); the exhibition pamphlet, *Music in Archaeology* (Braun 1994); Pirhiya Beck's treatment of the lyre-player in her article on the drawings from Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Beck 1982); the discussion of the Musicians' Stand from Ashdod (Dothan, M. 1970a; 1970b; Dothan, T. 1982: 249–251) and the Orpheus Jar from Megiddo (Dothan, T. 1982: 149–153); that of the figurines holding a round object, interpreted by some as a drum (Hillers 1970; Amiran 1967; Beck 1990; 1999; Meyers 1987; and others). Carol Meyers, in her articles (1987; 1991), was the first to consider the figurines under discussion here in relation to social-gender issues. Another example is the article on the typology of lyres from Iron Age Israel (Lawergren 1998). Further consideration of the iconographic depiction of musical instruments

2 The writer explained the lack of musical instruments among the archaeological finds from Eretz-Israel as the result of the climate, which did not permit their preservation, and the second of the Ten Commandments, which forbade the making of images.

and their players can be found in *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Keel and Uehlinger 1998).

The recent work by J. Braun (German original 1999, English translation 2002) represents a good point of departure for this study, since it includes a corpus of most of the archaeological finds connected with music in Israel from the prehistoric periods until Roman times. It is also significant for its treatment of the historical, linguistic, and ethnographic sources. Its title, *The Musical Culture of Ancient Israel*, implies the author's interest in the cultural aspects; however, large portion of the discussion revolves around purely musical issues, less around the social aspects.

In Israel, scholars tend to focus on the artistic-musical-iconographic aspects of the instruments and their depiction. Elsewhere, by contrast, including parts of the ancient Near East, such as Egypt, archaeomusicological research is more generally concerned with the socio-cultural aspects of ancient music. *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt*, by Lise Manniche (1991), is an example of this approach.

1.4. Gender Archaeology

Gender is a set of socio-cultural values which touches upon or relates to sex, but is different from *sex* proper, which distinguishes between the sexes on the basis of biological criteria. The ascription of individuals to gender categories (*gender attribution*), such as those of men or women, is achieved by means of various criteria – social, biological, etc. The social separation of the sexes creates *gender roles*, that is, activities which men and women perform normatively within certain social contexts. These activities can be the consequence of *gender ideology* – an attitude relating to the symbolism and values accompanying gender attribution in a particular society (Hays-Gilpin and Whitley 1998: 1–10).

The differing social functions assigned to men and women create variations within the assemblages of archaeological culture. However, the interpretation of the finds confronts certain problems: First of all, it is not always possible to differentiate between the finds in terms of gender. Another (and crucial) problem is that scholars tend to be influenced by their ideological point of view or by the culture to which they belong in relation to the respective social functions of men and women (Conkey and Spector 1984: 6, 10; Scott 1997: 1–2; Sørensen 2000: 32–33; Nelson and Rosen-Ayalon 2002: 4).

Until some two decades ago, archaeological research was beset by androcentrism, as expressed in the interpretations of the finds. As a result, women were not represented fairly or adequately in archaeology, and the interpretive process made them “invisible”, so to speak (Scott 1997: 2; Sørensen 2000: 33; Nelson and Rosen-Ayalon 2002: 4).

By the beginning of the 1980s, following the development of a feminist critique in various fields of study, such as sociology and anthropology, this tendency was subject to a reappraisal (Wylie 1991: 31; 1992: 15–18; Conkey and Spector 1998: 24–30; Gilchrist 1999: 6; Gosden 1999: 131; Nelson and Rosen-Ayalon 2002: 3–5). It stimulated the development of gender studies in archaeology, initially focussing on criticizing sexism and androcentrism, while adhering to constructive analysis (Wylie 1991: 31–32, 38–44; Conkey and Spector 1998: 24–25, 30–33). Alongside this critique, there were attempts to ascertain the role of women in antiquity in a manner that was not distorted by masculine stereotypes. By degrees, making women “visible” became a central aim of gender studies (Wylie 1991: 31–32; Sørensen 2000: 17).

In 1984, Margaret Conkey and Janet Spector published a seminal essay (“Archaeology and the Study of Gender”) in which they explained the need for a discussion of gender issues in archaeology, while proposing lines for future research (Conkey and Spector 1984). This essay represents the beginning of gender archaeology as a sub-discipline (Wright 1996: 1), since it was followed gradually by archaeological studies relating to gender as a separate category worthy of consideration. At the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s, archaeologists recognised gender as a structural and dynamic principle important for the development and transformation of ancient societies (Wylie 1991: 35; Conkey and Gero 1997: 417–419; Sørensen 2000: 19, 42–43), and, alongside various feminist studies (for example, DuCros and Smith 1993), there were attempts at more careful and better-balanced assessments of the gender aspects of the archaeological finds.

Some of these studies were supported by materialist and functionalist methods, in the spirit of processual archaeology. Such studies are basically concerned with women, and consider the feminine experience a universal phenomenon warranting cross-cultural connexions and analogies within the framework of processual archaeology’s concern with “major themes”, such as the processes of development and social change (Scott 1997: 1). *Women in Prehistory* (Ehrenberg 1989) is an example.

Nevertheless, it appears that post-processual archaeology comprises a more suitable framework for gender studies. Its development, together with the influence of the critical approach, feminist studies, and post-modern philosophy, enhanced the awareness of antiquity’s multiple voices and the need to listen to them (Scott 1997: 1; Sørensen 2000: 34). As a result, scholars began to concern themselves with various groups in society, including women, which had not received commensurate attention in the past (Moore and Scott 1997; Gilchrist 1999: 34–35; Sørensen 2000: 1). Post-processual archaeology permits discussion of women and gender, since it relates to the individual as a subject of study, and concerns itself with aims and motives (Shanks and Tilley 1987: 122–126; Hodder 1989: 73–74); it stresses the individual’s activity within the social framework, and it analyses gender categories in relation to time and space, while taking into consideration the specific historical and cultural context. Studies of this kind,

concerned with early cultures in various places around the world, have been collected in several books: e.g., *Engendering Archaeology*, edited by Joan Gero and Margaret Conkey (Gero and Conkey 1991), a milestone in the field of gender research in archaeology, and which includes Wylie's theoretical essay (Wylie 1991); *Gender and Archaeology*, edited by Rita Wright (1996); *Reader in Gender Archaeology*, edited by Kelly Hays-Gilpin and David Whitley (Hays-Gilpin and Whitley 1998); and the books by Nelson (1997) and Gilchrist (1999), among others.

Gender archaeology has thus produced a theoretical model concerned with the identification of gender structures in various societies – their dynamics, the relations between them, and their participation in the construction of other social structures. It recognises that women comprise a decisive and influential factor in society, both as a class and as individuals, and acknowledges their potential and their ability to join fully in the social enterprise (Scott 1997: 6; Sørensen 2000: 8).

Although most gender studies are concerned with women, some focus on men (Knapp 1998), and there have even been attempts to develop a theory of gender from the male perspective (Gosden 1999: 131). A number of scholars are interested in clarifying the lines of resemblance or difference between the sexes, in order to understand the relationship between them and the meaning of the feminine or masculine experience in a given culture (Peleg 1999: 120; Gosden 1999: 131).

As I have already noted, gender roles and the activities performed by men and women respectively influence the material finds, and are liable to create differences within the archaeological assemblages. Certain objects reflect gender ideology and are influenced by it, while influencing it in return, and contributing to the formation of gender identification (Sørensen 2000: 74–82; Bender 2000: xxi; Nelson 2002: 9). It is thus important to examine the connexion between gender and material culture and the manner in which gender relationships are expressed in the material culture of diverse societies, and to understand how gender is influenced by different objects and how it utilises them (Sørensen 2000: 71–72). A number of studies are concerned with “engendering” material culture, that is to say, ascertaining the connexion between material culture and gender: e.g., *Gender and Material Culture in Archaeological Perspective* (Donald and Hurcombe 2000a), *Representations of Gender from Prehistory to the Present* (Donald and Hurcombe 2000b), and *Gender and Archaeology* (Wright 1996); Roberta Gilchrist's book explores the material culture of nuns (Gilchrist 1993); and there are collections of essays which summarise congresses devoted to the subject, such as *Craftsmen, Craftswomen and Craftsmanship in the Aegean Bronze Age* (Laffineur and Betancourt 1997) and *From the Ground Up: Beyond Gender Theory in Archaeology* (Wicker and Arnold 1999).

Several studies have been devoted to the subject of figurines and gender in various cultures. The work of Elizabeth Brumfiel (1996) on Aztec figurines

and the essay by Susan Langdon (1999) on figurines and social-gender change in preclassical Greece afford good examples of this approach.

The present study is concerned with the gender significance of the figurines of female drummers in Iron Age Israel, and with the social practice they represent, the aim being to grant a voice, as it were, to the women who participated in these socio-cultural, religious, and musical activities, and to weave them into the complex social fabric of Israel during this period.

1.5. Methodology

This study makes use of diverse sources of information: archaeological, ethnographic, and historiographic. In order to derive maximum benefit from the data available to me, I have adopted the principles of the archaeomusicological model developed by Dale Olsen (1986) for his research on ancient flutes in Columbia. It proposes a combination of several disciplines in order to achieve a cogent synthesis of the musical information.

Olsen enumerates four main procedures or lines of approach: the archaeomusicological, its basis being the instruments themselves; iconographic analysis of the music; ethnographic analogies and their analysis; and historiography. Each of these procedures represents a step towards the final goal – the comprehensive understanding of the musical activity, including its cultural and social aspects (Olsen 1986: 306–307). This model is holistic and ideal. In reality, the scholar does not always possess all the data, so that it proves impossible to utilise all the procedures the author describes. In the present study, part of the archaeomusicological material is lacking – that concerned with the analysis of the ancient instruments themselves, drums having not been retrieved from excavations in Israel. In the following I will enumerate the information and research procedures employed in my study.

A. The Archaeological Finds

This study is chiefly concerned with drum-related artefacts from Eretz-Israel: ceramic figurines of various types, as well as the Musicians' Stand from Ashdod. Mention will also be made of several other finds connected with music, such as flute-player figurines, which contribute to our understanding of the topic under review.

In describing and analysing the artefacts, their archaeological context, date, and spatial distribution will also be taken into account.

The iconographic examination of the finds is of crucial importance to our discussion. This procedure includes the description, identification, and analysis of the musical instruments or similar objects, as they appear in the figurines and in other iconographic sources. The musicians themselves will be described and (insofar as possible) identified. The iconographic settings in which the drums and musicians occur will also be considered.

These procedures yield patterns and preliminary conclusions about the use of the drum and the various gender and cultural contexts in which the instrument and the figurines associated with it appear.

B. Written Sources

In addition to the archaeological finds, this study makes use of written, especially biblical, sources. The Old Testament includes numerous references to musical instruments and the occasions on which music was performed. I have chosen to relate to those relevant to my topic, and I examine each reference separately in the spirit of the critical approach to the Bible. In this context, I have included a description and analysis of the drum and its playing, as it is depicted in various biblical passages. I have naturally consulted the diverse studies concerned with music and its performance in the Old Testament.

Drumming is also mentioned in extra-biblical sources, especially from Mesopotamia and Egypt. These references can contribute to our understanding of the settings in which drums were played, and will be drawn upon as parallels to drumming in Eretz-Israel.

C. Ethnomusicology

Another discipline which proved of considerable value to me was ethnomusicology – a combination of anthropology, ethnography, and musicology.³

Anthropological analysis is concerned with two main aspects of music: performance and its various musical characteristics, and music's social significance. Various studies have examined the function of music in shaping identity; the ways in which musical practice is involved in the reproduction or transformation of other social and cultural practices; and how music serves to either confirm or confront existing or newly emerging patterns of power and dominance (Stokes 1998: 383, 386).

This method includes the search for ethnographic analogies and the determination of their validity for the purposes of my study. These are important in widening the base of information at our disposal, and in either supporting or refuting the thesis. These analogies can be divided into two classes:

1. Archaeological and Iconographic Analogies – These parallels include archaeological finds relating to drumming from the ancient Near East: musical instruments, wall paintings and reliefs, figurines, and other artefacts from Egypt (Manniche 1975; 1991); scenes occurring on various vessels and figurines from Cyprus (Karageorghis 1993; 1995; 1998); figurines and other artefacts from Phoenicia; figurines, reliefs, and other finds from Mesopotamia (Rimmer 1969); finds such as seals and stamps from Syria; figurines

3 For the development of this discipline and the history of ethnomusicological research, see Braun 1997: 71; Stokes 1998: 384–386.

discovered in Transjordan have also been taken into account (Amr 1980). I was greatly assisted in the course of my study by archaeomusicological research carried out in these regions.

2. *Ethnographic Analogies* – Analogies from living cultures. I consulted various ethnographic studies in the search for parallels to phenomena and patterns relating to drumming, such as arise from the archaeological finds under review. Numerous studies are devoted to the general subject of music and society (Seeger 1977), and the connexions between music, social identity, and gender in various cultures around the world (Diallo and Hall 1989; Sarkissian 1992; Stokes 1997; Doubleday 1999; etc.). These works contribute an extra dimension to the meaning of drumming in Iron Age II Israel.

D. Archaeomusicology

As mentioned above, drums have not been found in Eretz-Israel, and thus it has not been possible to undertake a musical study of the instruments themselves. However, I have availed myself of the research concerned with archaeomusicology in Israel (see above, Ch. 1.3.) In addition, archaeomusicological studies from elsewhere in the world, such as the Near East and Latin America (Olsen 1986), have been drawn upon insofar as they contribute methodologically to my investigation and facilitate comparisons with musical finds from similar social contexts in the past.

1.6. Chronological Framework

The main finds with which I am concerned originate in the various phases of Iron Age II. In this study, I have adopted the chronological framework of the Iron Age and its subdivisions as proposed by A. Mazar (1990)⁴:

Iron Age I: c. 1200–1000 BCE
 Iron Age IIA: c. 1000–925 BCE (Pharaoh Shishak's campaign)
 Iron Age IIB: c. 925–732 BCE (Assyria's conquest of Northern Israel)
 Iron Age IIC: c. 732–600/586 BCE (Babylonian conquest)

Another element which is connected with the chronological division and which, in fact, overlaps with it, is the monarchy's break-up. Iron Age IIA represents the United Kingdom, whereas Iron Age IIB–C corresponds to the Divided Kingdom, that is to say, the Kingdom of Israel in the north and the Kingdom of Judah in the south. This distinction is important for the spatial distribution of the figurines under review, since, as I plan to show, there

⁴ It should be noted that this subdivision of the Iron Age, as well as others by different scholars, is based mainly on historical considerations and political events, not on data derived from material culture.

are differences between Israel and Judah, especially in the 8–9th centuries BCE.

Although, for purposes of convenience, I adhere to the “high chronology”, I shall also consider the finds in the context of Finkelstein’s “low chronology” in the course of the discussion. On the basis of various arguments, he contends that the date of the 11th-century BCE assemblages should be lowered to the 10th century, and those of the latter to the 9th century, in order to close the gap which he claims exists in the 9th-century’s material culture (Finkelstein 1995; 1996; 1999). I shall show that Finkelstein’s lower chronology has interpretive significance for only a small portion of the finds under discussion. Regarding the figurines (the main assemblage), the application of the lower chronology does not have meaningful implications or alter the conclusions. However, regarding the Musicians’ Stand from Ashdod, the lower chronology can serve to clarify a number of issues concerning its cultural context and the origin of the subject it depicts, and I shall consider this possibility.

In addition, I will present various examples from earlier periods and, in order to understand the picture in its entirety, I will examine the processes involved within a chronological framework wider than Iron Age II.

1.7. Spatial Framework

The geographical framework of this study comprises the borders of Israel today (including the Palestinian territories), and parts of Transjordan – the inhabited zone that extends to a maximum width of some 40 km. These are the boundaries that are generally accepted in research on ancient Israel (A. Mazar 1990: 1).

Israel’s geographical position as a bridge between the two horns of the Fertile Crescent (Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia), and between the Mediterranean Sea (and the countries beyond) in the west and the desert in the east, conferred upon it an important role in the history of the ancient Near East (*ibid.*). Owing to constant contact, there were obviously links and reciprocal influences between Israel and its neighbours. These found expression in various ways, including in the arts, e.g., painting and ceramic sculpture and music. Accordingly, I shall cite examples and parallels from various lands in the ancient Near East, such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, the Phoenician coast (Lebanon), and Cyprus. Within this spatial framework, Eretz-Israel will be examined both as recipient and influence, and as an area which created a local tradition.

1.8. The Drum

The system commonly accepted today for classifying musical instruments was developed by the musicologists Kurt Sachs and Erich von Hornbostel. According to their system, instruments are divided into four classes:

1. *Idiophones* – Instruments which produce their own sounds: e.g., bells, rattles, and cymbals.
2. *Membraphones* – Instruments possessing a membrane, usually of taut leather, the sounds of which are produced by beating upon them. The various drum types belong to this class.
3. *Aerophones* – Instruments whose sounds are produced by means of air blown through them. All the wind instruments, such as the flute, belong to this class.
4. *Chordophones* – Instruments whose sounds are produced by means of strings stretched over them: e.g., harp, lyre, lute, etc. (Sachs 1940: 454–467).

The ancient instruments include all four classes. As stated above, the drum, the subject of this study, is a membraphone.

The drums of the ancient Near East came in a wide range of shapes and sizes: round, square, cylindrical, hourglass-, chalice-, bowl-shaped, etc. The membrane, usually of leather, was fastened to the frame by means of glue, nails, thongs, or ropes. The drums were held and played in different positions (Blades 1984: 601–604; Braun 1997: 73; Bienkowski 2000: 203). The drum depicted in the figurines under discussion was small and round; one or two leather membranes were stretched over its wooden frame. In certain studies, it is called the “frame drum” or “hand frame drum” (Meyers 1991: 18). Some scholars term it a “tambourine”. However, the tambourine known to us today has cymbals around the rim, a feature which can only be traced from the 13th century CE on (ibid.). For this reason, I shall refrain from referring to the “tambourine” in this study, and confine myself to “drum”, “frame drum”, and “hand drum”.

The word “drum” (*top* in Hebrew) occurs several times in the Old Testament. In each instance the context indicates the small hand drum. It is the only biblical word designating a membraphone, and it is related to the instrument’s name in Sumerian (*dup/tup*), and in several Semitic languages: *tuppu* in Akkadian, *tuppa* in Aramaic, and *duff* in Arabic. The drum also appears by its biblical name (*tp*) in an Ugaritic text citing several instruments (Mitchell 1992: 132)⁵. The name also appears in Greek as *typanon*, later *tympanon*, and in Latin as *tympanum* (Meyers 1991: 21).

The drum apparently originated in the 3rd millennium BCE in Mesopotamia, whence it spread to Egypt and other regions in the ancient Near East. It should be noted, however, that, in view of the wide range of drums current in Mesopotamia and Egypt, it is surprising that only one type has been identified in Israel (ibid.).⁶

⁵ This text appears on Pl. RS.24.252 (Mitchell 1992: 132; see references there).

⁶ Braun (2002: 118) claims that the large ceramic rings recovered from various sites and identified as large storage-jar stands were perhaps large drums. This seems to me improbable, however, since there is no indication of a membrane being stretched over the frame.

Chapter 2

The Archaeological Data – Catalogue of Figurines

This chapter presents a catalogue of 98 Iron Age artefacts from Israel and Transjordan in which drumming is depicted. They mainly comprise figurines and figurine fragments, as well as a complete cultic stand. The figurines can be divided into three classes:

- A. Plaque figurines of a woman holding a round object⁷. This class includes 65 figurines from Israel and Transjordan⁸: eight are complete, four almost complete, and 52 fragmentary. There is also a complete mould.
- B. Hollow, conical figurines of women holding a drum (the “coastal type”). This class includes 14 figurines from the north of Israel, which is often considered, culturally speaking, part of the Phoenician coast. Eight are complete, one is almost complete, and 5 are fragmentary.
- C. Drummer figurines of hybrid character. Eighteen of these, from Israel and Transjordan, bear the mixed characteristics of both above groups, but

Another artifact which Braun presents as a possible darabuka-like drum is a cylindrical pottery fragment from Tell Abu-Hawam. I consider it too small to be a darabuka. It is furthermore a singular find which has no counterpart elsewhere.

7 In the description of figurines in the catalogue, I may already refer to the round object as a drum, for reasons of convenience. The interpretation of the object as a drum is discussed in 4.1.1.

8 Two figurines from Yoqne’am, ascribed by Tadmor (2005: 354–356) to Types A and B were not added to the catalogue. The first (Registration no. 9550/1; figure and photo III.8) is a lower body fragment of a plaque figurine, with characteristic consistent with those of the Type A figurines presented here. However, the upper body part is completely missing, and there is no evidence for the hands holding a disc. The second figurine (Registration no. 4668; figure and photo III.9) is a fragment of a disc with two palms on its surface. According to Tadmor, the disc was free-standing, and attached to the body only in a small area in the back, parallel to the right palm; therefore, she considers this fragment a part of a conical-shape hollow figurine of Type B (*ibid.*: 355). However, I doubt this identification, since the main characteristics of this fragment are typical of Type A figurines: there is a circle representing a frame of the drum on the disc, and the fingers of both hands are depicted in details (see discussion in 3.1.2). Since the fragment is currently unavailable for examination (the finds from Yoqne’am are in a process of reception and registration in the Israel Antiquity authority), I refrain from attributing it to any type of figurines at the moment. Thus it was not included in the present catalogue.

without belonging clearly to either. Two of these figurines are complete, two almost complete, and 14 fragmentary.

The cultic stand from Ashdod depicting an ensemble of musicians, including a drummer, is treated in a separate section within this chapter.

The artefacts in the catalogue are supplied with the following data: site of discovery, archaeological context, the excavator's dating (unless indicated otherwise), the artefact's present location, and its physical and iconographic description. There are also occasional comments and references to the literature.

It should be noted that one does not always have all the basic information about the artefacts under review. This problem arises because the provenance of many of the figurines is unknown, while others have not been properly published.

The artefacts in the catalogue have been arranged alphabetically by site: first the figurines from Israel, then those from Transjordan, and finally those of unknown provenance.

2.1. Type A: Plaque Figurines of Women Holding a Round Object

A.1. Aphek. Almost complete figurine (fig. 2.1: 1).

Context: Locus 1359. Hidden in a four-room house. Registration no. 11099.

Date: 10th century BCE.

Description: Face damaged. A necklace. There is a headdress, and the clay margins around the figure may represent a veil. A small drum held between both hands. The breasts are salient. The female genitals are depicted with a triangle.

Comments: The figurine was underneath a beaten-earth floor yielding numerous vessels. It was found while dismantling the floor, c. 10 cm below the surface.

Literature: Kochavi 1975: 51f, pl. IIc; Beck 1990: note 3: 19; 1999: table 7: 2: 17; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.25. Ester Yadin provided information about the figurine's provenance.

A.2. Beth Shean. Almost complete figurine (fig. 2.1: 2).

Context: Near Locus 1549. Upper Stratum V. Registration no. 30–12–84.

Present location: The Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem. Collection no. 1.9684.

Date: 9th–8th centuries BCE.

Description: The figure wears a headdress or a high, ornate hat. The facial features are coarse, the eyes are large. She wears a garment, apparently a skirt, made of bands and decorated with geometric designs. A necklace, three armlets on her right arm, and two bracelets on her wrist. The drum

is decorated with two circles and two sets of pearl-like dots. It is held against the left side of her chest. Her left hand supports the bottom of the drum, while her right hand is lying upon it. The fingers are depicted. The right breast is salient.

Comments: the figurine is identical to A.27 from Rehov, and was produced in the same mould.

Literature: James 1966: fig. 112: 5; Holland 1975: C.6.A.3; Beck 1990: note 3: 4, fig. 3; 1999: fig. 7.7: 2; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.3; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–11C.

A.3. Beth Shean. Body fragment.

Context: Locus 1024, Northern Temple, Lower Stratum V. Registration no. : P29–103–883. 25–9–595.

Date: 10th century BCE.

Description: Drum, highly worn, is held against the left side of the chest; it is exceptional in that it juts away from the body. The woman's right arm extends towards the drum, while her right hand, its fingers shown, rests upon it. To the right is a salience denoting the right breast.

Literature: James 1966: fig. 111.1; Holland 1975: C.6.A.4; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.5; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–13a.

A.4. Beth Shean. Head and upper part of body.

Context: Locus 1010, Southern Temple. Lower Stratum V. Registration no. 25–9–336.

Date: 10th century BCE.

Description: A headdress with vertical stripes. Diagonal stripes, perhaps denoting hair, descend to the right shoulder. Large protruding eyes. Drum held against the left side of the chest, while the right hand touches it. The fingers can be distinguished. A salience marks the right breast.

Literature: James 1966: fig. 111.4+7; Holland 1975: C.6.A.4; Beck 1990: note 3: 3, fig. 9; 1999: fig. 7.7: 5; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.4.

A.5. Beth Shean. Body Fragment (fig. 2.1: 3).

Context: Locus 1063, southeastern quarter of Area D. Lower Stratum V.

Date: 10th century BCE.

Description: A woman's body holding a child and drum. On her neck is a collar or necklace of square beads. Armlets and bracelets on her right arm and wrist. A belt around her hips is probably part of her garment. The child and the drum are supported by her left arm, while her right hand extends towards the child and rests on the drum. The fingers are depicted. The child is wearing a headdress or hat. The rim of the drum is adorned with dots of sort. On the right of the woman's chest is a salience denoting her breast.

Literature: James 1966: fig. 111.6; Beck 1990: note 3: 5, fig. 5; 1999: fig. 7.7: 7.

A.6. Delhamiya. Body fragment (fig. 2.1: 4).

Context: Tzori's excavations. Square 1. Registration no. 2170.

Date: Iron Age I, according to the excavator.

Present location: Israel Antiquities Authority, collection no. 69–1538.

Description: The drum is held against the left side of the chest. The figurine's left hand extends towards the drum from below, her right hand from the side. The fingers can be clearly distinguished. On her right hand are bracelets and armlets. Three curving stripes, perhaps part of a necklace, are incised above her chest to the right. Her right breast is salient; it is pierced in the middle. Underneath the arms is a girdle comprising semicircles. The drum is decorated with concentric circles which emphasise the rim. One of the circles consists of smaller circles, and looks like a string of pearls.

Literature: Tzori 1958; Beck 1990: note 3: 6; 1999: fig. 7.7: 6; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.5.

A.7. Gezer. Body fragment (fig. 2.1: 5).

Context: Exact provenance unknown. "Third Semitic Period" in Macalister's excavations.

Description: A naked woman with a salient right breast, a pregnant belly, and genitals showing. The drum is held against the left side of her chest. Her left hand appears to support it from below, while her right hand touches the drum here as well. On her right arm she wears three armlets and three bracelets. The fingers of her hands are depicted. Her right hand has six fingers. The drum has a smooth, accentuated frame; it is decorated on the inside with two concentric circles separated by rings of smaller circles, like strings of pearls. The figurine has margins to either side adorned with incisions.

Literature: Macalister 1912b: pl. CCXXI: 2; Pritchard 1943: V: 160; Holland 1975: C.6.A.5; Beck 1990: note 3: 21; 1999: table 7: 2: 18; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.6.

A.8. Gezer. Head and upper part of body (figure 2.1: 6).

Context: Exact provenance unknown. "Third Semitic Period" in Macalister's excavations.

Date: End of 8th century BCE (according to Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 164).

Description: A woman with a headdress that looks like a decorated veil or scarf flowing down both sides and the back of her body. Her hair falls, like Hathor's locks, below the shoulders. Her facial features are pronounced. On her neck are a collar and a necklace with a crescent-moon pendant. Her right breast is salient. The drum is held against the left side of her chest; her left hand supports it from below, while her right hand reaches up to it from the side. Her right hand has six fingers. She

wears three armlets on her each of her arms, and three bracelets on each of her wrists. The drum is decorated with a prominent smooth rim; inside are two circles with pearls of sorts. The figurine has decorated margins to either side of the body; these appear to represent a continuation of her headdress.

Comments: There is a striking similarity between this figurine and A.6, and I believe that both may have been produced by the same mould.

Literature: Macalister 1912a: fig. 499; Pritchard 1943: V: 161; Amiran 1967; Holland 1975: C.6.A.10; Beck 1990: note 3: 20; 1999: table 7: 2: 18; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.7; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 190f.

A.9. Hazor. Head and upper part of body (fig. 2.1: 7).

Context: Area A, Locus 159, part of Street 174 – between the fortification wall and houses. Stratum VIII. Registration no. 410/1.

Date: 9th century BCE.

Description: The woman's facial features are distinct. Her eyes are large and pronounced, but her mouth is not shown. Her headdress has vertical stripes, and the shocks of her hair fall below the shoulders on both sides of her head. The ears can be seen in detail; her right ear has a loop-earring. On her neck is a collar or chain with a round pendant. Her salient right breast is pierced in the middle. The drum is held against the left side of her chest. Her left hand supports it from below, while her right hand touches its rim. She has a bracelet on her right wrist. Her fingers are clearly distinguished. The drum is adorned with an incised circle which accentuates the rim.

Literature: Amiran 1967: note 3; Holland 1975: C.6.A.12; Yadin *et al.* 1960: pl. 76: 12, 163: 2; Beck 1990: note 3: 2; 1999: fig. 7.7: 10; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.10; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig. 190a.

A.10. Hazor. Body fragment.

Context: Area A, Locus 159b, an open area inside the fortification wall. Stratum X. Registration no. 1830/1.

Date: 10th century BCE.

Description: The figurine is made from gritty pink clay with a grey core. The woman's right breast is salient. The drum is held against the left side of her chest. Her left hand supports it from below, while her entire right hand lies across it. The fingers of both hands can be distinguished. There are two bracelets on her right wrist. The drum's rim is accentuated by an incised line.

Literature: Amiran 1967: note 3; Holland 1975: C.6.A.11; Yadin *et al.* 1980: pl. 76: 13, 163: 1; Beck 1990: note 3: 1; 1999: table 7: 2: 2; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.11.

A.11. Jatt. Body fragment (fig. 2.1: 8).

Context: Chance surface find.

Present location: Israel Antiquities Authority. Registration no. 95–4246.

Description: The head and the lower part of the legs are missing. Coarse dark clay with numerous grits. Above the right shoulder is the edge of a headdress or some item of jewellery. The figure is apparently wearing a necklace. The drum is held against the left side of the chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand, extending from the side, beats upon it. There are bracelets on her wrists. The drum's rim is adorned with a band of perforated circles, like a row of pearls. Above, to the left, is another, leaf-like design on the band. The woman's right breast is salient. Her navel is vividly depicted, and directly underneath she is wearing a short dress which covers the lower portion of her body until the knees. It comprises an ornamental girdle with a plaited skirt below. Underneath the girdle to the left is a decorated diagonal band, probably part of her dress.

Literature: Horowitz 2001: 1*–2*.

A.12. Khirbet Nesiba (Kerem Ben Zimra). Complete figurine.

Context: Unstratified.

Present location: Israel Antiquities Authority, Collection no. 91–437.

Date: 9–8th century BCE.

Description: Well-preserved intact figurine. Height 11.5 cm; width 3.5 cm; thickness 3 cm. Orange-brown clay with light inclusions. The smoothed back show signs of working with a sharp implement. The figure wears a headdress with vertical lines on the forehead, representing a hat or bang. The facial features are pronounced and detailed: big almond-shape eyes with pupils, big nose with nostrils, detailed ears with earrings, and mouth. On the neck she wears a double necklace with beads. Her salient right breast is pierced in the centre. The drum is held against the left side of the chest, left hand supports the drum from below, while her right hand extends across it. The fingers of her right hand can be clearly distinguished. The accentuated rim of the drum is decorated with two concentric circles with small circles and few lines between them. The navel is accentuated. There are two diagonal stripes and a horizontal belt on the belly. The female genitals are very detailed. The figure wears double armlets and anklets, and the toes can be distinguished. The figurine has a small plain margin around the figure.

Comments: The figurine was found during a survey, at the eastern edge of the site in 1980. The Iron Age II levels of the site are dated to the 9–8th centuries BCE, thus the date of the figurine.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Emanuel Eisenberg provided the data presented here.

A.13. Khirbet Umm el-Butm. Body fragment (fig. 2.1: 9).

Context: Surface find retrieved in course of survey.

Present location: Apparently in possession of A. Zertal. Survey registration no. 17–20/83/1.

Description: The head and legs are missing. To either side of the figurine are clay margins lacking decoration. Pits across the neck signify a necklace. The drum is held against the left side of the chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand reaches towards its lower portion and rests upon it. A slightly diagonal line is incised across the top of the drum. The woman's right breast is salient. She is wearing bracelets. Her belly is swollen in pregnancy, and her navel is shown. There is no indication of clothing.

Literature: Zertal 1988: pl. 24: 7.

A.14. Megiddo. Head and upper part of body (fig. 2.1: 10).

Context: Square Q7, Locus 1004, apparently a room in Stratum II, but the excavators contend that the figurine is intrusive and originates in Stratum III.

Date: End of 8th century–7th century BCE.

Present location: Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem, Collection no. 36.944.

Description: The sides of the figurine were smoothed down by a knife, and it bears traces of light red slip. The woman wears a headdress, and there are marks on the chin and behind the head that possibly indicate a veil. Her hair is represented by lines incised diagonally in the direction of the face. On her neck is a collar or necklace. Her almond-shaped eyes are prominent, and her mouth is accentuated. Underneath her arms is a striped skirt. The drum is held by both hands against the middle of her chest, but slightly closer to the left side. Her left hand, extending from the side, supports it from below, while her entire right hand rests on the top. The fingers of both hands are clearly depicted.

Literature: May 1935: pl. 27: M4365; Pritchard 1943: V: 166; Holland 1975: C.5.B.16; Beck 1990: note 3: 13; 1999: table 7: 2: 12; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.18; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–10b.

A.15. Megiddo. Head and upper part of body.

Context: Square O13 of Stratum III, perhaps sacred precinct. The exact location is uncertain, and it is unclear whether this was the room of a building or an area adjoining it, in which case the figurine might be connected with Building 338 of Stratum IV.

Date: 9th–8th centuries BCE.

Description: Traces of light red slip. The woman has a headdress, and her coiffure is marked by diagonal lines incised in the direction of her face and reaching the level of her shoulders. Her eyes protrude, and her mouth is accentuated. The drum is held by both hands against the middle of her chest; her left hand holds it from below, while her entire right hand rests upon it. Her arms are incised breadthwise with lines, perhaps indicating clothes or armlets.

Comments: This figurine is very similar to A.14, and it is possible that they were both produced from the same mould.

Literature: May 1935: pl. 27: M787; Pritchard 1943: V: 162; Holland 1975: B.5.C.4; Beck 1990: note 3: 14; 1999: table 7: 2: 12; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.19.

A.16. Megiddo. Part of head missing, body complete (fig. 2.1: 11).

Context: Square R9, underneath Locus 1693, the paved courtyard of Palace 1723. The exact location is uncertain, but it appears that the figurine derives from Paved Courtyard 1720. Stratum V.

Date: Probably 10th century BCE.

Present Location: Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem, collection no. 36.958.

Description: Yellowish clay with red slip. The drum is held against the left side of the chest; the woman's right hand supports it from below, while her right hand reaches to it from the side and rests completely upon it. Its rim is accentuated with a simple circle. The fingers of both hands are carefully depicted. Her right breast is denoted by a perforated cavity. A double line, incised down the middle of the body, terminates underneath the drum in a volute. The woman has salient bracelets and anklets, and on her neck is a distinct collar or necklace. Her belly is slightly protruding. The female genitals are depicted with a triangle. The lower portion of her coiffure, which cascades to her shoulders, is intact.

Literature: May 1935: pl. 28: M5418; Pritchard 1943: V: 168; Holland 1975: C.5.B.21; Beck 1990: note 3: 15; 1999: table 7: 2: 13; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.16; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–14.

A.17. Megiddo. Complete figurine.

Context: Square N12, Locus 712/3 in Schumacher's trench. The excavators proposed ascribing it to Stratum V on the basis of its similarity to figurine A.16.

Date: Apparently 10th century BCE.

Description: Yellowish clay with red slip. The woman wears a headdress which descends down the back and both sides of her head. Her eyes are pronounced and their pupils are pierced. On her neck she wears a collar or necklace. She has double armlets on her right arm and double anklets on both legs. The drum, which is very worn, is held against the left side of her chest. Her left hand is indistinct owing to erosion, but her right hand touches the drum. Underneath the drum, an incised line runs down the middle of her body.

Comments: Owing to its striking similarity with A.16, the excavators believe that both figurines were possibly produced in the same mould.

Literature: May 1935: pl. 27: M810; Pritchard 1943: V: 169; Holland 1975: C.B.18; Beck 1990: note 3: 11; 1999: table 7: 2: 11; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.17.

A.18. Megiddo. Head missing, body complete (fig. 2.1: 12).

Context: Tomb from Stratum II of Schumacher's excavations; the area of the "Nordburg".

Date: Pilz ascribed the tomb to c. 1500 BCE.

Description: The drum is held against the left side of the woman's chest; her left hand supports it from below, while her right hand rests upon it. The fingers of both hands are distinct. The drum's rim is decorated, and there is an inner band with dots. The woman has double armlets and bracelets, and from the hips down she is wearing a kind of wrap which seems to consist of two girdles decorated with dots and triangles. At her ankles are anklets or the lower fringe of trousers.

Literature: Schumacher 1908: Abb. 71; Pilz 1924: E94; Pritchard 1943: V: 159; Holland 1975: C.6.A.17; Beck 1990: note 3: 9; 1999: table 7: 2: 9, fig. 7.7: 3; fig. 4; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.13.

A.19. Megiddo. Complete body. Poor state of preservation.

Context: Locus 1760, a paved open area with a few traces of construction. Stratum VII.

Date: 12th century BCE (?).

Description: The very poor state of preservation does not permit a more precise description of this figurine.

Literature: Loud 1948: pl.243: 20; Holland 1975: C.6.A.15; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.37.

A.20. Megiddo. Fragment lacking head and lower part of body.

Context: Area K, Locus 105, dwellings amassed within a structure. Stratum K2 = VA–IVB. Registration no. 96/K/105/AR6.

Date: 10th century BCE.

Description: The drum is held against the left side of the chest; the right hand touches it. The right side of the chest is slightly protrusive. In the middle of the body, above the drum, is a diagonal band decorated with dots, apparently part of the figurine's attire. Underneath the drum is a suggestion of clothing. There is possibly a bracelet on the woman's right wrist.

Literature: Finkelstein, Ussishkin and Halpren 2000: fig. 12.36.1.

A.21. Megiddo. Head and upper part of body (fig. 2.1: 13).

Context: Square O14, Stratum IV, apparently Room 286 in Building 338.

Date: 10th–9th centuries BCE.

Present location: Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem, collection no. 36.926.

Description: A woman holding a drum against the left side of her chest. Her facial features are distinct. Her headdress possibly continues as a veil in the back. On her neck are three rows of sunken dots which look like a collar or necklace. On her right hand are three bracelets, and she possibly wears earrings. Her right hand rests upon the drum, and the

fingers are clearly depicted. The rim of the drum is incised with lines which produce a prominent band, while the inner circle is adorned with impressed rings.

Literature: May 1935: pl. 27: M1138; Pritchard 1943: V: 165; Holland 1975: C6.A.19; Beck 1990: note 3: 12; 1999: table 7: 2: 12; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.15; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–11b.

A.22. Megiddo. Complete figurine.

Context: Square P13, Locus 37, apparently a room in a sacred precinct. Stratum V.

Date: 10th century BCE.

Description: A headdress which continues as a kind of mantilla in the back. Locks or braids fall to the shoulders. On the woman's cheeks are incised lines which possibly denote a veil across the face. The eyes are prominent, while the nose and mouth are worn. The drum is held against the left side of the chest, and the woman's right hand touches it. Her fingers can be distinguished. She is wearing a skirt.

Literature: May 1935: pl. 27: M65; Pritchard 1943: V: 164, fig. 15; Holland 1975: C.6.A.20; Beck 1990: note 3: 10; 1999: table 7: 2: 10; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.14; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig. 190d; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–13B.

A.23. Rehov. Complete figurine (fig. 2.2: 1).

Context: Area C, stratum 4, locus 6436, square A5. Destruction debris above floor in a room in a building. Registration no. 64735.

Present location: Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Date: 9th century.

Description: Height 12 cm, width 4 cm. Reddish-brown clay with small and medium inclusions. The rounded smoothed back show signs of working with a sharp implement. The figure wears an ornamented headdress with a veil. There is a jewel or pendant on the forehead. The almond-shape eyes are pronounced. The nose is long and slightly broken. The mouth is wide and coarse, and seems to have been improved after the casting was done. There are big earrings. On the neck there is an elaborated necklace.

The right breast is salient. The drum is held against the left side of the chest. The left hand supports it from below, while the right hand extends across it. The fingers of her right hand are detailed. A single line around the edge represents the frame of the drum. On the right arm there are two armlets and two bracelets. The navel is depicted. Two incised lines run down the middle of her body. The female genitals are clearly depicted as a pierced triangle. There are double anklets on both legs, and the toes are worn but distinguished.

Comments: The figurine is very similar to A.24 and A.25, and seems to have been produced in the same mould. In the top and bottom of the backside there are marks indicating possible attachment to an altar or stand.

Locus 6436 is on floor of a room inside a building, and has provided intact vessels, restorable pottery, an animal figurine, stone implements, grindstones and stone bowls, spindle whorls, big quantity of loom weights, bone tile with hieroglyphics and a seal.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Amihai Mazar and Yael Rotem provided the data presented here.

A.24. Rehov. Head and upper part of body (fig. 2.2: 2).

Context: Area C, Stratum 4, locus 7404, square Y6. Layer of burnt brick debris on surface inside a structure. Registration no. 74023.

Present location: Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Date: 9th century BCE.

Description: Length 6 cm, width 3.2 cm, thickness 2 cm. Light yellowish clay with gray core and few small black inclusions. The rounded smoothed back show signs of working with a sharp implement. The figure wears an ornamented headdress with a veil, and a jewel or pendant on the forehead. The almond-shape eyes are pronounced. The nose is long and slightly broken. The mouth is wide and coarse and the lips are indicated. The ears are big and there are big worn earrings. On the neck there is an elaborated necklace with a pendant.

The right breast is salient. The drum is held against the left side of the chest. The left hand supports it from below, while her right hand extends across it. The fingers of her right hand can be clearly distinguished. A single line around the edge represents the frame of the drum. On the right arm there are two armlets and two bracelets. The navel is depicted, and an incised line runs down the stomach.

Comments: very similar to A.23 and A.25, probably from the same mould. On the upper back part there are marks of possible attachment to an altar.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Amihai Mazar and Yael Rotem provided the data presented here.

A.25. Rehov. Head (fig. 2.2: 3).

Context: Area B, Stratum 4(?), locus 6253, square E20. Accumulation with restorable pottery, possibly continuation of locus 6224. Registration no. 6238.

Present location: Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Date: 9th century BCE.

Description: Height 3.7 cm, width 4.5 cm, thickness 2.3 cm. Orange clay with light gray core. The backside was smoothed with a sharp implement. The figure wears an ornamented headdress which continues with a veil behind the shoulders. There is a jewel or pendant on the forehead. The almond-shape eyes are pronounced. The nose is long and slightly broken.

The ears are big and there are big worn earrings. The mouth is open and the lips are indicated.

Comments: Though the body and drum are missing, the fragment is identical to 74023; therefore it is considered a drummer figurine. Probably produced in the same mould as A.23 and A.24.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Amihai Mazar and Yael Rotem provided the data presented here.

A.26. Rehov. Body fragment (fig. 2.2: 4).

Context: Area G, Stratum 5 (local phase G2), Locus 5034, square P3. Fallen and decayed bricks, with pottery, flint, grindstone, stone objects and beads. Registration no. 50204.

Present location: Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Date: 10th century BCE (?).

Description: height 9.8 cm; width 6.5 cm; thickness 3.4 cm. Orange clay with gray core and medium amount of black and white grits. On the smoothed back there are marks of working with a sharp implement and finger prints.

On the right shoulder there is a lower part of a Hathor curl. The right breast is very salient. The drum is held against the left side of the chest, slightly protrudes outside. The frame of the drum is pronounced by a circle with geometrical zigzag decoration inside. The left hand supports the drum from below, while the right hand is spread on it. The fingers are detailed. There are bracelets on both hands, and armlets on the right arm. On the lower part of the body the figure wears a garment with vertical and diagonal stripes decorated with geometrical design. The lower part of the legs and feet is broken. Under the arms there are clay margins which create a frame to the figurine.

Comments: the figurine is identical to A.45 from Tel el-Far'ah (N) in every detail, and was probably fashioned in the same mould.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Amihai Mazar and Yael Rotem provided the data presented here.

A.27. Rehov. Almost complete figurine (fig. 2.2: 5).

Context: Area B, Stratum 4-4', Locus 4216, square. F19. Found while dismantling a brick wall; the figurine possibly belongs to St. 4 surface of plaster floor. Registration no. 62084.

Present location: Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Date: probably 9th century BCE.

Description: Height 7.7 cm; width 2.9 cm; thickness 1.6 cm. Orange clay with black inclusions. There is red slip on the entire figurine. The back is well smoothed and polished. The figurine is small and delicate, with many fine details. The figure wears a high decorated hat, with a dotted band on the forehead. She has almond-shape eyes. The nose is broken and the mouth and ears are slightly worn. There are earrings. There is a

small cut on the left side of the face. Several horizontal stripes go down to the chest on both sides of the body, depicting locks of hair.

The right breast is salient and pierced. The drum is held against the left side of the chest. The left hand supports it from below, while her right hand extends across it. The fingers of her right hand can be clearly distinguished. The frame of the drum is depicted by two concentric circles, a circle of pearl-like dots and a second circle of imprinted dots. On the right hand there are double bracelets and armlets. Under the arm the figure wears a garment with geometric designs.

Comments: The figurine is completely identical to A.2 from Beth Shean, and they were probably produced in the same mould.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Amihai Mazar and Yael Rotem provided the data presented here.

A.28. Rehov. Body fragment (fig. 2.2: 6).

Context: Area B, Locus 1222. Clean Iron II locus with Phoenician pottery sherds, isolated while digging an Islamic pit. Registration no. 12247.

Present location: Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Date: Iron Age II.

Description: Height 5.2 cm; width 5.1 cm; thickness 2.3 cm. Orange coarse clay with few black inclusions. The figure has a necklace with square beads. On both shoulders there are hair locks. The right breast is salient but partly broken. The drum is held against the left side of the chest. The left hand supports it from below, while her right hand extends across it. The fingers of her right hand are detailed. The frame of the drum is indicated by a simple circle. On the right arm there are double bracelets and armlets.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Amihai Mazar and Yael Rotem provided the data presented here.

A.29. Rehov. Head and upper body.

Context: Area C, Stratum 5, Locus 2419, square T1. Occupation debris in possible open area in unit with domestic activity. Registration no. 24257.

Present location: Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Date: 10th century BCE.

Description: the figurine is badly preserved and worn. Height 9.4 cm; width 5 cm; thickness 2 cm. Orange clay with gray core and white inclusions; poorly fired. The back is smoothed. There is a broken headdress. Most of the facial features are worn and broken. On the right side there is a braid ending with a curl above the breast. The right breast is salient, and slightly broken. On the left side of the chest there is an outline of a disc, indicating the presence of the drum. The worn right arm is bent and approaches the left side of the chest.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Amihai Mazar and Yael Rotem provided the data presented here.

A.30. Rehov. Body fragment.

Context: Area E, Stratum 4 (local phase E1a), Locus 1653, square E14. A street, with large quantity of pottery sherds, bones, flint, beads, metal items and figurines. Registration no. 46703.

Present location: Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Date: 9th century BCE.

Description: worn body fragment. Coarse light clay, with remains of dark red wash. On the shoulders there are curls. The right breast is salient and pierced in the centre. The drum, worn and broken, is held against the left side of the chest, the right hand on it. There are bracelets on the right arm. The left hand is broken. On the lower part of the body there is a garment in four geometrically decorated bands.

Comments: The design, especially the garment, is very similar to A.27 from Rehov and A.2 from Beth Shean.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Amihai Mazar and Yael Rotem provided the data presented here.

A.31. Rosh Pina. Body fragment.

Context: Unstratified.

Present Location: Israel Antiquity Authority.

Date: Iron Age II.

Description: Height 6 cm; width 7.1 cm. The head is missing. There are curls on both sides of the neck. The figure wears a diagonal decorated stripe across the chest. The right breast is salient. The drum is held against the left side of the chest, left hand supports the drum from below, while her right hand extends across it. The hands are broken. The rim of the drum is accentuated and decorated with a zigzag pattern, dots and a circle.

Comments: The figurine was found in a survey in the 1990's. Iron Age II remains were found in the site during an excavation in 2002.

Literature: Stepansky 2002.

A.32. Samaria. Head and upper part of body.

Context: Zone S2, Square H9, sub. 69. Herodian room with earlier levels beneath it. Registration no. 4782.

Description: The clay is grey on the inside and red on the surface. A standing woman with crude facial features – large, almond-shaped eyes, a salient, damaged nose, and an incised mouth. Her hair is long; it forms bangs over her brow, and slips behind her ears to her shoulders. Her arms extend below her breasts, and it is possible that they hold a round object against the middle of her chest.

Comments: Holland suggested that the figurine is holding a drum.

Literature: Reisner, Fisher and Lyon 1924: pl. 75b; Holland 1975: C.6.A.24; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.22.

A.33. Samaria. Head and upper part of body.

Context: Zone 58. Herodian room with mixed assemblage 840 over the Israelite palace courtyard.

Description: Brown-black clay, red slip. Signs of stone-burnishing on back. The very worn figurine represents a standing woman. She has a headdress or coiffure with bangs, which flows down to her shoulders. The facial features are worn, but one can distinguish her eyes and incised mouth. Her right breast is salient. The drum is held against the left side of her chest; her left hand supports it, while her right hand beats upon it. The fingers are clearly indicated. The drum's rim is adorned with impressed dots.

Literature: Reisner, Fisher and Lyon 1924: pl. 75a; Holland 1975: C.6.A.25; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.23.

A.34. Samaria. Body Fragment.

Context: Room 423 in the Ostraca House. According to the excavators, the figurine was found in the occupation level containing Samaritan pottery. Registration no. 4960. No photograph or drawing of the figurine has been published.

Literature: Reisner, Fisher and Lyon 1924: 384; Holland 1975: C.6.A.26; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.24.

A.35. Taanach. Complete figurine mould (fig. 2.2: 7).

Context: Destruction level in Cultic Structure, Room 1.

Date: End of 10th century BCE (?).

Description: Margins around entire figure. The woman has a composite headdress, part of which descends like a veil to the sides and the back. Underneath it, just above the forehead, are two broad bands scored with diagonal grooves; these shroud her head and cover her ears. Her eyes are pronounced and almond-shaped, and she has a ridge-like nose and small mouth. Her right breast is represented by a salience pierced in the middle. The drum is held against the left side of her chest; her left hand supports it from below, while her right hand, extending from the side, reaches upwards towards it. The fingers are depicted. She has bracelets on both wrists. On the curve of her belly is a small circle denoting her navel. Below is a girdle. She has three anklets above each foot, and the toes are clearly depicted.

Literature: Lapp 1964: 39–41, fig. 21; Holland 1975: N.1.A.6; Beck 1990: note 3: 8, fig. 2; 1999: fig. 7.7: 1; Nakhai 1994: 27; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.38; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig. 190b; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–12a.

A.36. Tel 'Amal. Body fragment (fig. 2.2: 8).

Context: Stratum 4. The figurine's exact provenance has not been published.

Date: Probably 10th century BCE.

Present Location: Israel Antiquities Authority, Collection no. 67–1134.

Description: The drum is held against the left side of the body. The left hand supports it from below, while the right hand, extending from the side, rests upon it. The fingers are clearly depicted, and there are double bracelets on both wrists. A salience marks the woman's right breast. The drum's rim is accentuated and decorated with bands of zigzag designs.

Literature: Edelstein (no year): 27, fig. 21; Levy and Edelstein 1972: fig. 17: 7; Holland 1975: C.6.A.1; Beck 1990: note 3: 7; Kletter 1995: 5.E.31.1.

A.37. Tel Dover. Body fragment.

Context: Locus 101, Basket 1334. Debris layer above a floor.

Present location: Israel Antiquity Authority.

Date: Iron Age II.

Description: Height 6.9 cm; width 4.5 cm; thickness 2.5 cm. Orange-greyish clay with few large basalt inclusions, medium fired. The back and sides were smoothed with a sharp implement. On the neck there was probably a necklace with pierced dots. On the right shoulder there is an end of a hair lock. The right breast is indicated and pierced in the centre. The drum is held against the left side of the chest, left hand holding it from below while the right hand is also on the drum. Around the edge of the drum there is a circle of pierced dots. The fingers are detailed. On the right arm there are remains of bracelets. On the lower part of the body there is a geometrically decorated garment with a belt.

Comments: Found in an Israel Antiquity Authority excavation held 1997 between the mound and the Yarmouk River, directed by Alexander Onn and Samuel Wolff. The figurine is identical to A.38 and was produced in the same mould. The locus yielded mostly Late Bronze Age material, thus the context is not clean.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Samuel Wolff provided the data presented here.

A.38. Tel Dover. Body fragment.

Context: Random surface find. Israel Antiquity Authority no. 93–5393.

Present location: Israel Antiquity Authority.

Date: Iron Age II.

Description: Height 4.5 cm; width 4.5 cm; thickness 2.5 cm. Light brown clay with basalt inclusions. The back was smoothed with a sharp implement. The right breast is salient and pierced in the centre. The drum is held against the left side of the chest, the left hand supports it from below and the right hand is on it. Around the edge there is a circle of pierced dots. There are remains of a bracelet on the right arm.

Comments: The figurine was found by local settlers and displayed in the Sha'ar Hagolan Museum. It is identical to A.37 found in the excavations of Tel Dover, and was made in the same mould.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Samuel Wolff provided the data presented here.

A.39. Tel Dover. Body fragment.

Context: Random surface find. Israel Antiquity Authority no. 93–5392.

Present location: Israel Antiquity Authority.

Date: Iron Age II.

Description: Height 5.7 cm; width 6.6 cm; thickness 2 cm. Orange clay with medium-large inclusions, well-fired. The back was smoothed by using a sharp implement. The drum is held against the left side of the breast, the left hand supports it from below and the right hand is on its surface. The fingers are depicted. There are bracelets and possibly armlets on the right arm. On the lower part of the body the figure wears a garment composed of horizontal bands with geometric designs of dots, triangles and short lines. The legs are missing. On both side of the figurine there are clay margins forming a frame to the figurine.

Comments: The figurine was found by local settlers and displayed in the Sha'ar Hagolan Museum. It seems to have been made in the same mould as A.40.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Samuel Wolff provided the data presented here.

A.40. Tel Dover. Lower body fragment.

Context: Locus 120, Basket 1373. Mixed context containing Hellenistic, Late Bronze and Iron Age II material.

Present location: Israel Antiquity Authority.

Date: Iron Age II.

Description: Height 3.4 cm; width 4.5 cm; thickness 1.9 cm. Orange clay with small grits. The backside is well smoothed. The fragment is of lower part of a decorated garment. On the legs there are anklets. The feet are missing.

Comments: Found in the Israel Antiquity Authority excavation held 1997, between the mound and the Yarmouk River, directed by Alexander Onn and Samuel Wolff. The identification of this fragment as a drummer figurine is based on its similarity to A.39. This fragment seems as an exact continuation of the lower part missing in figurine A.39. It is thus probable they were produced in the same mould.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Samuel Wolff provided the data presented here.

A.41. Tel Hadar. Almost complete figurine (fig. 2.2: 9).

Context: Locus 279. Refuse dumps near the fortification wall. Registration no. 2016/1.

Date: Apparently 10th century BCE.

Description: The legs are missing. The drum is held against the left side of the chest, and the woman's right breast is exposed and salient. Her left hand supports the drum from below, while her right hand extends across it. The fingers of her right hand can be clearly distinguished. Her facial features are delicate and slightly worn. She wears an ornamental headdress, and the margins of the plaque, protruding to either side of her body, appear to represent its continuation. She has a necklace, and armlets and bracelets on her right arm and wrist. Distinct bands, forming a kind of triangle in the area of the loins, apparently denote some article of clothing.

Literature: Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.29. Additional information provided by Ester Yadin.

A.42. Tel 'Ira. Complete figurine (fig. 2.2: 10).

Context: Locus 512. The southern room of Public Building 522, next to the gate. Stratum VII. Registration no. 4265/1.

Date: First half of 7th century BCE.

Present Location: Israel Antiquities Authority, Collection no. 84–62.

Description: Height 13 cm; width 4 cm. Pinkish grey clay. The smoothed back reveals signs of working with a sharp implement. Diagonal grooves above the forehead signify the headdress or coiffure. The eyes are large and rounded. The nose is long and damaged. The lips are thick. The ears are shown in detail. In the lower portion of the face around the chin there is a kind of flat, jutting ledge whose meaning is unclear. The drum is held against the left side of the chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand reaches over it. The right breast is salient and feminine. The drum's rim is decorated with a band of dots. The fingers of the hands are accentuated. The figure wears a double necklace with round beads and three bracelets on each wrist. The belly is rounded, and the navel is marked by an impressed circle. Below the belly is a belt, beneath which one can discern the male genitals. The legs are short in relation to the body, and the figure is wearing double anklets.

Comments: Beck describes the figure as a hermaphrodite.

Literature: Beit-Arieh 1985: 17–25; Beck 1990; 1999: 386–394, fig. 7.5; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.30; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–10a.

A.43. Tel Malhata. Head and upper part of body (fig. 2.2: 11).

Context: Locus 1027. Clearing of surface in room. Apparently from Stratum IV. Registration no. 1555.

Date: 8th century BCE.

Description: Height, 8.8 cm; width 4.8 cm. Light, well-kneaded clay. The back is flat and smooth. A tall headdress with vertical grooves above the brow which continue to the back and down towards the sides, forming a kind of veil. The woman's coiffure consists of three engraved strands, possibly braids, on either side of her head, and reaching her shoulders. The eyebrows are pronounced and meet just above the onset of her nose. The nose itself is long and quite damaged. Drawn-out, almond-shaped eyes. The mouth is missing, but the ears are depicted in detail. The line of the jaw and chin is rounded. The woman wears a necklace consisting of three ridges. The middle one is smooth, while the others are incised with small vertical grooves that look like beads. On the right side of her chest is a worn protrusion – apparently her breast. The drum is held against the left side of her chest. Her arms are bent, and their hands touch the drum. Her left hand supports its bottom, while her right hand reaches to its middle. One cannot distinguish the details of the fingers or any decoration on the drum. The margins of the plaque extend to either side of the figure.

Literature: The figurine has not yet been published. Itzhaq Beit-Arieh has provided the data presented here.

A.44. Tel Malḥata. Head and upper part of body.

Context: Locus 1128, apparently from inside room. Stratum IV. Registration no. 1719.

Date: 8th century BCE.

Description: Poor state of preservation; the figurine is very worn. Height 8 cm; width 5.5 cm. Light, well-kneaded clay. The smoothed back reveals signs of working with a sharp implement. The woman's coiffure consists of three strands, possibly braids, on either side of her head; they descend to her shoulders, and those on the right have diagonal grooves. The facial features are very worn. She is possibly wearing a necklace. The drum is held against the left side of her chest. There are margins on either side of the body.

Comments: In spite of the poor state of preservation, this figurine is markedly similar to A.21, and I believe they might have been produced in the same mould.

Literature: Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.42. Additional information provided by Itzhaq Beit-Arieh.

A.45. Tell el-Far'ah (North). Body (fig. 2.3: 1).

Context: Locus II-460. Central room or space in Building 440, apparently a house. Stratum VIIB. Registration no. F3426.

Date: 10th century BCE.

Description: Height 9.7 cm; width 6 cm. Reddish clay. The figurine is surrounded by a border. The back is smoothed. The coiffure reveals a Hathor-style lock on the right. The salient right breast is pierced in the

middle. The drum is held against the left side of the chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand extends over it. The fingers are depicted on both hands. There are several bracelets on the right wrist. The accentuated rim of the drum is decorated with a zigzag design. Below the right hand and the drum is a short skirt reaching to the knees; it is decorated with geometric patterns.

Note: The figurine is identical in every detail to A.26 from Rehov, and they seem to have been produced in the same mould.

Literature: Chambon 1984: pl. 63: 2, pl. 84; Beck 1990: note 3: 16; 1999: table 7: 2: 14, fig. 7.7: 4; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.32; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig. 190c; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–11a.

A.46. Tell el-Far‘ah (North). Body fragment.

Context: Locus II-426, perhaps a building at the edge of the excavation area, in a sector disturbed by the foundations of a structure from the following stratum. Stratum VIIB. Registration no. F3031.

Date: 10th century BCE.

Description: Reddish clay with a black core. The drum is held against the left side of the chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand beats upon its edge. The drum's rim is accentuated. The fingers are depicted, and the woman's right breast is salient.

Literature: Chambon 1984: pl. 63: 1, pl. 84; Beck 1990: note 3: 17; 1999: table 7: 2: 15; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.33.

A.47. Amman (Jebel Qal‘ah). Body fragment (fig. 2.3: 2).

Context: Surface find.

Present Location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman. Collection no. J12313.

Description: The right breast is salient. The drum is held against the left side of the chest. The left hand supports it from below, while the right hand rests upon it. The drum's frame is emphasised by two concentric circles and a row of dots. The woman is wearing bracelets. Underneath her hands is a girdle decorated with dots.

Literature: Amr 1980: no. 86; Dornemann 1983: 129, pl. 89: 3; Beck 1990: note 3: e; 1999: table 7: 2: 23; Kletter 1995: 5: E.1.20.

A.48. Dibon. Head and upper part of body.

Context: Area L; the exact location has not been published, but probably a room in the palace district.

Date: Unknown.

Description: The figurine is very worn. The woman has a headdress, large, prominent eyes, a damaged nose, and a practically invisible mouth. The line of her jaw and chin is pointed. Her hair falls down both sides of her head, reaching her chest in two large shocks. The drum is held against the middle of her chest, but slightly closer to the left side. Her arms,

extending from the sides, reach it from below. The hands are worn, and it is impossible to distinguish their disposition.

Literature: Morton 1989: 321, fig. 15; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.8.

A.49. Deir 'Alla. Almost complete body (fig. 2.3: 3).

Context: Unpublished. Registration no. DA 2609.

Present Location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman. Collection no. J13773.

Description: The right breast is indicated with a salience. The drum is held against the left side of the chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand plays upon it. There is a simple circle on the drum. Armlets and bracelets are seen on both hands, and anklets on both legs. The body is scored with various grooves, perhaps signifying clothing – a robe.

Literature: Amr 1980: no. 87, pl. 16: 2; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.26.

A.50. Deir 'Alla. Body fragment.

Context: Locus DA/D/C/7.8. Stratum IV.

Date: 8th century BCE (?).

Description: The drum is held against the left side of the chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand beats upon it. It appears that the drum's frame has been depicted with a simple circle. The fingers are shown, and there are bracelets on the right wrist. The woman's right breast is salient.

Literature: Amr 1980: 63f, no. 34; Zayadine 1987: no. 159; Beck 1990: note 3: b; 1999: table 7: 2: 20; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.27.

A.51. Deir 'Alla. Almost complete body (fig. 2.3: 4).

Context: Probably Locus DA A237.

Present Location: Leiden (Holland).

Description: Height, 8.6 cm. The figure is naked and wears jewellery – bracelets, armlets, anklets, and different bands on the upper part of the body. The drum is held against the left side of the chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the entire right hand covers it. The drum's rim is adorned with triangles. The woman's right breast is salient, and her genitals are stressed.

Literature: Amr 1980: no. 35; Holland 1975: C.6.A.6; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.28.

A.52. Deir 'Alla. Almost complete body (fig. 2.3: 5).

Context: DA/B 124.

Present Location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman. Collection no. J12699.

Description: The figure is naked. Lines and dots incised on her neck signify a necklace with a round pendant. Both breasts are visible. She has armlets on both arms, and a girdle across her waist. The drum is held by both

hands, and its rim is incised with lines in a zigzag pattern. Her genitals are vividly depicted between her thighs.

Comments: This figurine is very similar to A.35.

Literature: Franken 1960: pl. 13a; Amiran 1967: note 4; Holland 1975: C.6.A.7; Amr 1980: no. 33; Beck 1990: note 3: a; 1999: table 7: 2: 19, fig. 7.7: 8; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.40.

A.53. El-Mashhad (next to Nebo). Head and upper part of body.

Context: Surface find.

Date: Unknown.

Description: Poor state of preservation. No decoration.

Comments: Glueck (1934: 27) initially claimed that the figurine depicted a man, but he later wrote (1945: 153) that it was a goddess with a loaf of bread.

Literature: Glueck 1934: fig. 8; 1940: fig. 82; Holland 1975: C.6.A.22; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.2.

A.54. Heshbon. Body fragment (fig. 2.3: 6).

Context: Unpublished. "Phase 194".

Date: Probably 11th century BCE.

Present Location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman.

Description: Height, 5.2 cm. The drum is held against the left side of the chest. Decoration on the neck apparently signifies a necklace. The figure wears several armlets and bracelets. Her right breast is shown. The drum's rim is stressed and adorned with a dot design.

Literature: Amr 1980: no. 88, pl. 16: 3, type IID4; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.12.

A.55. Irbid. Body fragment.

Context: Grave A. Exact location within grave unknown.

Date: 10th–9th century BCE.

Description: The figurine is very worn. The right breast is salient. The drum is held against the left side of the chest; its middle is adorned with dots. The woman is wearing armlets and bracelets.

Literature: Dajani 1966: pl. 33: 16; Holland 1975: I: 196, A.10.G.3; Dornemann 1983: 130, IA: 16; Beck 1990: note 3: d; 1999: table 7: 2: 22; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.1.

A.56. Kerak (region). Head and upper part of body.

Context: Unknown.

Present Location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman. Collection no. TJ421.

Description: A very coarse figurine. A peculiar hat, raised and flat on top, with horizontal grooves and decoration in the middle. The woman's braids slip behind her ears and form Hathor curls on her shoulders. Her facial features are quite crude. The eyes protrude and the pupils are pierced; her large nose is damaged; the lips are thick. The line of her chin is round. On her neck she wears three necklaces: two are smooth, while the middle

one is scored with small grooves, producing square beads. Her salient right breast is pierced in the middle. The arms are slightly damaged. The drum is held against the left side of her chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the entire right hand, large in proportion to the body, spreads over it. Her fingers are shown. The drum is decorated with crude grooves, producing a pattern of triangles.

Literature: Harding 1937: pl. X: 9; Holland 1975: C.6.A.6; Beck 1990: note 3: g; 1999: table 7: 2: 25; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.34.

A.57. Kerak (region). Head and upper part of body.

Context: Unknown.

Present location: Private collection.

Description: Headdress and coiffure consisting of long, scored braids which fall below the shoulders. Large, protruding eyes; a lengthened nose; the mouth is practically invisible. The ears are clearly shown. The line of the jaw and chin is slightly pointed. The drum is small and held relatively high, just under the chin. The left hand supports it from below, while the entire right hand spreads over it. The fingers are depicted. Underneath the hands are a number of horizontal lines which evidently represent a girdle or part of a dress.

Literature: Harding 1937: pl. X: 8; Glueck 1940: fig. 83 left; Holland 1975: C.6.A.13; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.35; Beck 1999: table 7: 2: 24.

A.58. Kerak (region). Figurine fragment.

Description: There is no further information about this artefact.

Literature: Zayadine 1987: 96, no. 128; Beck 1999: table 7: 2: 26.

A.59–60. Kerak (region). Temple model with two complete figurines on its façade (fig. 2.3: 7).

Context: Unknown.

Present Location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman. Collection no. 15751.

Description: Height 15.9 cm; width, 14.9 cm. The hand-made model is fashioned in the shape of a rectangular structure with a flat back. To either side of the entrance is a mould-made, plaque-type figurine of a woman with a drum. Both stand on raised bases which are joined to the sides of the opening. They are rather crude. Both wear conical hats. The facial features seem to be partially hidden by masks. The line of the jaw and chin is rounded. Their long hair, falling to either side of their heads, reaches their shoulders. Both have long necklaces. The drum is held against the left side of the chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand beats upon it. They wear girdles around their waists. The genitals are depicted as a distinct triangle with a vertical slit down the middle. Both wear several anklets.

Literature: Amr 1980: 95, fig. 104; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–15.

A.61. Khirbet 'Ayun Musa (near Nebo). Body fragment.

Context: Surface find.

Description: There is no further information about this artefact.

Literature: Holland 1975: C.6.A.23; Beck 1990: note 3: c; 1999: table 7: 2: 21; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.39.

A.62. Transjordan, provenance unknown. Head and upper part of body.

Present location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman. Collection no. J11145.

Description: Height 6.6 cm; width 4.2 cm. Similar, but not identical, to A.39. It is difficult to ascertain whether the object in the figurine's hand is, indeed, a drum.

Literature: Amr 1980: no. 81, pl. 15: 1; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.41.

A.63. Transjordan, exact provenance unknown. Complete figurine.

Present location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman. Collection no. JT1639.

Comments: The photograph of the figurine is poor, and it is difficult to describe its features.

Literature: Holland 1975: C.6.A.2; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.21.

A.64. Provenance unknown. Head and fragment of body.

Present Location: Haifa Museum of Ancient Art. Collection no. 3818.

Description: On the upper part of the figurine there are vertical grooves. Over her brow are two broad bands. Her hair, marked with diagonal grooves, falls on either side of her head to her shoulders. Her facial features are refined: the eyes are large with prominent pupils; the nose is delicate and triangular in shape; and her mouth is depicted in relief. The line of her jaw and chin is rounded. A ridge across her neck possibly indicates a necklace. The drum is held against the middle of her chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand rests spreads over it. The fingers are shown. Underneath the drum is a dress decorated with bands, partially smooth and partially exhibiting small squares.

Literature: Zemer 1991: 26, no. 37, photo on p. 93; Kletter 1995: 5.E.1.36.

A.65. Provenance unknown. Headless, but body complete.

Description: Height 12.7 cm. The figurine is probably wearing a necklace with a round pendant. The drum is relatively large, and its rim is emphasised. It is held against the left side of the chest; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand spreads across it. The fingers are shown. The woman is wearing bracelets. Her right breast is salient, and her navel is marked by a pit. She has a girdle at her waist, and a diagonal band – perhaps some item of clothing – across her belly. Her genitals are prominent. She has double anklets, and the toes can be described.

Literature: Deutsch 1995: 57, lot 223; Beck 1999: 387, fig. 7.6.



Figure 2.1. Type A figurines: 1. A.1 Aphek (TAU); 2. A.2 Bet Shean (IAA); 3. A.5 Bet Shean (Beck 1999: fig. 7.7: 7); 4. A.6 Delhamiyah (Beck 1999: fig. 7.7: 6); 5. A.7 Gezer (Macalister 1912b: pl. CCXXI: 2); 6. A.8 Gezer (Macalister 1912a: fig. 499); 7. A.9 Hazor (Beck 1999: fig. 7.7: 10); 8. A.11 Jatt (IAA); 9. A.13 umm el-butn (Zertal 1988: pl. 24: 7); 10. A.14 Megiddo (IAA); 11. A.16 Megiddo (IAA); 12. A.18 Megiddo (Beck 1999: fig. 7.7: 3); 13. A.21 Megiddo (IAA).



Figure 2.2. Type A figurines: 1. A.23 Rehov (Hebrew University); 2. A.24 Rehov (Hebrew University); 3. A.25 Rehov (Hebrew University); 4. A.26 Rehov (Hebrew University); 5. A.27 Rehov (Hebrew University); 6. A.28 Rehov (Hebrew University); 7. A.35 Taanach (Beck 1999: fig. 7.7: 1); 8. A.36 Tel 'Amal (IAA); 9. A.41 Tel Hadar (TAU); 10. A.42 Tel Ira (IAA); 11. A.43 Tel Malhata (TAU).

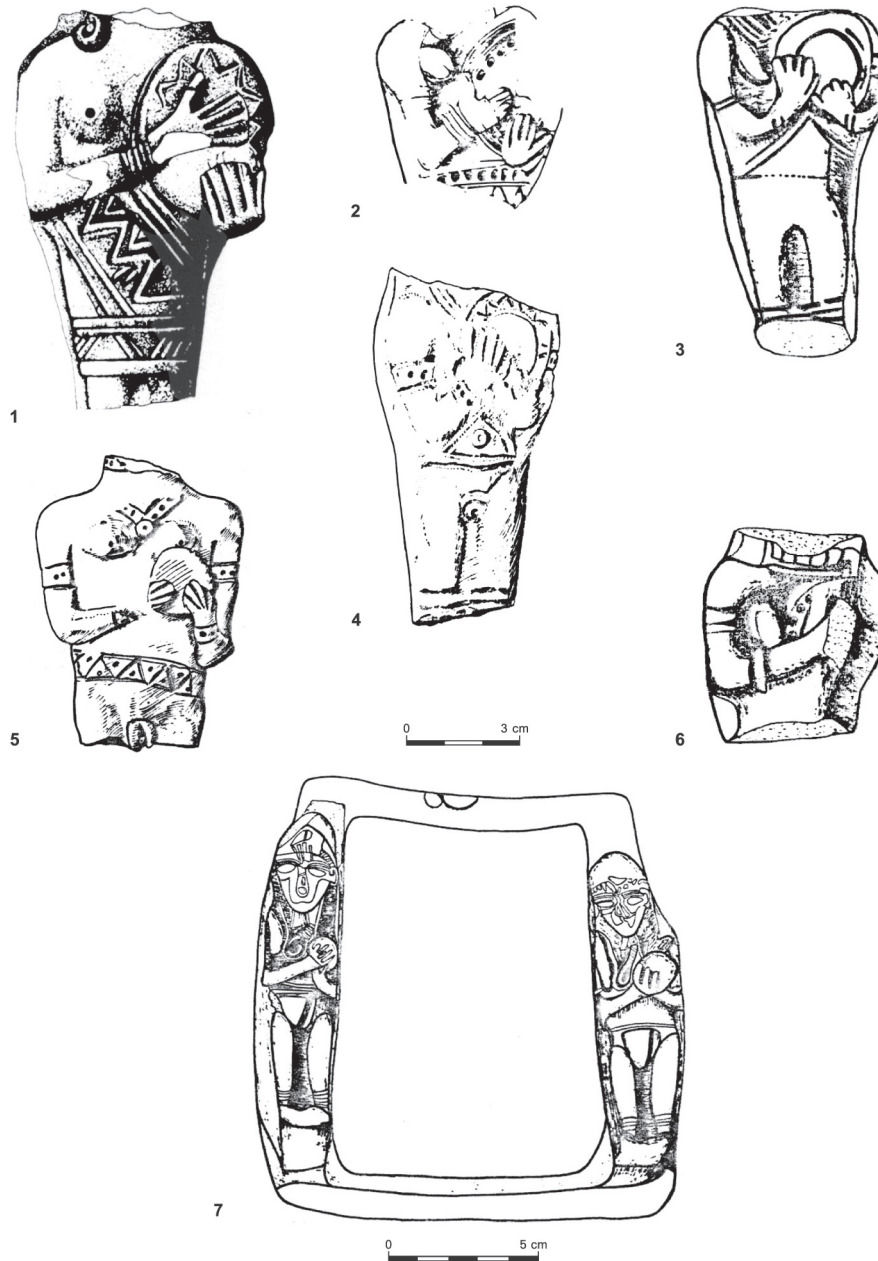


Figure 2.3. Type A figurines: 1. A.45 Tel el-Far'ah (N) (Chambon 1984: pl. 63: 2); 2. A.47 Amman (Amr 1980: no. 86); 3. A.49 Deir 'Alla (ibid.: no. 87); 4. A.51 Deir 'Alla (ibid.: no. 35); 5. A.52 Deir 'Alla (ibid.: no. 33); 6. A.54 Heshbon (ibid.: no. 88); 7. A.59–60 model shrine, Kerak region (ibid.: fig. 104).

2.2. Type B: Drummer Figurines with a Hollow, Conical Body (Coastal Type)

B.1. Achzib. Complete figurine (fig. 2.4: 1).

Context: er-Ras (eastern cemetery), Tomb 13, No. 43. Ben-Dor excavations, 1943.

Present location: Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem. Collection no. 44.53.

Date: 8th–7th BCE.

Description: Height 17.4 cm. The woman's long hair falls to her chest in shocks on either side of her head. The drum is held against the middle of the chest perpendicular to her body; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand beats upon it. The drum's rims are thickened. The woman's facial features are very worn.

Comments: Tomb 13 is a shaft tomb with one room containing burial platforms. In addition to the present figurine, another woman drummer (B.2) was found. The tomb also yielded seven complete amphorae, an oil-lamp, a copper lance-head, a seal, and two scarabs.

Literature: Kletter 1995: 5.F.2.1; E. Mazar 1996: 27, 100–101, pl. 53: 12; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1-2.

B.2. Achzib. Complete figurine (fig. 2.4: 2).

Context: er-Ras, Tomb 13, No. 44. Ben-Dor excavations, 1942.

Present location: Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem. Collection no. 44.54.

Date: 8th–7th centuries BCE.

Description: Height 21.9 cm. The head is hollow with a hole in the back. The woman's long hair, cascading down the sides of her head, reach the level of her chest, while bangs run across her brow. In the back, a long train of hair descends to below her shoulders. The hair reveals traces of black paint. The drum is held against the middle of the chest and perpendicular to the body; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand beats upon it. The drum's rim is slightly thickened. The woman's eyes are prominent, her nose is long and salient, and her mouth is small.

Comments: See comments concerning B.1.

Literature: Jones 1948: 89, pl. III: 2; Holland 1975: B.5.B.1; Engle 1979: VIII: 3; E. Mazar 1990: 109: photograph on p. 108 upper left; 1996: 27, 100–101, pl. 53: 13; Braun 1994: no. 7; 1999: fig. IV/1–3; Kletter 1995: 5.F.2.2; Dayagi-Mendels 2002: 145–6.

B.3. Achzib. Complete figurine (fig. 2.4: 3).

Context: er-Ras, Tomb 28, No. 4. Ben-Dor excavations, 1943.

Present location: Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem, collection no. 44.264.

Date: 8th century BCE (according to Zemer 1991: 24).

Description: Height 20.5. The woman's hair runs in a straight line across her brow, while two smooth shocks are drawn back behind her ears and

flow down in front below the level of her shoulders. In the rear her hair is long and reaches down the back. Her facial features are delicate, but worn. The drum is held perpendicular to the body and tilts to the left. The left hand supports it from below, while the right hand beats upon it. The drum's upper portion is broken. The figurine is adorned with red and black paint.

Comments: Tomb 28 is a shaft tomb with a single room containing burial platforms. The figurine was found on the right platform at the feet of one of the two skeletons, whose heads were facing south. On the left platform were another two skeletons, and three on the platform in the back. Some were adorned with jewellery. On the room's floor were many artefacts and scattered bones, and in the corners were two standing amphorae.

Literature: Zemer 1991: 24, no. 29, fig. on p. 83, photo on p. 85; Kletter 1995: 5.F.2.3; E. Mazar 1996: 26, 100–101, pl. 53: 14; Dayagi-Mendels 2002: 145–6, fig. 1.7.

B.4. Achzib. Almost complete figurine.

Context: Unpublished.

Present location: Hecht Museum, Haifa, collection no. 4047.

Date: 8th century BCE (according to Zemer 1991: 25).

Description: Height 22.5 cm. The woman's hair runs in a straight line across her brow, and two smooth shocks are drawn back behind her ears and fall across her chest. In the back her hair reaches just below the level of her shoulders. Her facial features are delicate. The drum is held in the middle of her chest perpendicular to the body; the left hand supports the drum from below, while the right hand touches it.

Comments: The coiffure is identical to that of B.2.

Literature: Zemer 1991: 25, no. 30, photo on p. 85; Kletter 1995: 5.F.2.5.

B.5. Achzib. Complete figurine.

Context: Tomb. Additional data unpublished.

Present location: Israel Antiquities Authority, collection no. 61–563, registration no. 612 (?).

Description: A woman with a drum. Height, 18.5 cm. Coiffure consisting of relatively short braids and curls falling vertically over her brow.

Literature: Kletter 1995: 5.F.2.4.

B.6. Achzib. Complete figurine (fig. 2.4: 4).

Context: Southern cemetery, Tomb T.A. 68 (Tomb of the Horsemen), E. Mazar's excavations, 1989.

Date: 8th–7th centuries BCE.

Description: Height 18.5 cm. The hair runs in a straight line across the woman's brow, and short braids or curls fall to either side of her head. In the back of the head is a small hole. The facial features are very worn. Red and black stripes running down the length of the body signify a tunic

or dress. The drum is held perpendicular to the body and tilts to the right. The left hand supports it at the bottom, while the right hand beats upon it. The drum's rim is thickened.

Comments: The tomb is a shaft tomb with a single room containing burial platforms. The figurine was found face-down next to the knee of an adult skeleton. However, in view of the fact that there were other skeletons, she is not necessarily connected with this one. She was accompanied by three horsemen figurines, Cypro-Phoenician vessels, Samarian bowls, eleven iron arrowheads, bone and ivory inlays, scarabs, a stone seal, beads, and jewellery.

Literature: E. Mazar 1990: 109, photos on p. 107 and on p. 108 (lower register); 1993: 5–6, photo on p. ix (upper register); 1996: 19–20, 100, pl. 53: 8; Kletter 1995: 5.F.2.6.

B.7. Achzib. Complete figurine.

Context: Eastern cemetery, Tomb 12, No. 7. Ben-Dor's excavations, 1942.

Date: 8th–7th centuries BCE.

Description: The figurine is complete, except for a small breakage at the bottom. Height 19 cm. The coiffure consists of shocks of hair on either side of the head flowing down to the chest. Traces of black paint. In the back of the head is a small hole. The facial features are slightly worn. There are hints of red paint on the conical body. The drum is held perpendicular to the body; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand spreads over it. The drum's rim is thickened and reveals traces of red paint.

Comments: This figurine is coarser in design than the others of the same type found at Achzib. Tomb 12 is a shaft tomb with one room containing burial platforms, burial niches, and a sarcophagus. In addition to the drummer, the tomb also yielded a flute-playing figurine, a warrior on horseback, various vessels, such as bowl with an everted rim, a jug with a splaying rim, two trefoil jugs, dipper-juglets, an oil-lamp, and scarabs dating to Egypt's 26th Dynasty.

Literature: E. Mazar 1996: 36, 100–101, pl. 53: 9; Dayagi-Mendels 2002: 145–6, fig. 7.3.

B.8–9. Kabri. Two hollow body fragments.

Description: A hollow cylindrical body.

Comments: Neither drawings nor photographs have been published. The state of preservation does not permit a definitive identification, but on the basis of comparisons with the findings from Achzib, Oren and Kletter ascribe the first fragment to a drummer, the second to a flute-player.

Literature: Oren 1994: 33–34, 45*–46*; Kletter 1995: 5.F.14–15.

B.10. Tell Qitaf. Head and upper part of body.

Context: A chance find during excavations of the fortifications.

Present location: Israel Antiquities Authority. Collection no. 54–91.

Description: Coiffure consisting of bangs with vertical curls above the brow, and short braids or curls to either side of the head. The facial features are very delicate. The figurine's arms and hands are missing. In the middle of the chest is a fragmentary object; it is held perpendicular to the body and tilts to the right. Both its cross-section and the angle at which it is held are suitable to its being a drum.

Literature: Tzori 1958: 53, pl. G: 5; Holland 1975: A.9.E.1; Engle 1979: VIII: 21; Kletter 1995: 5.F.2.8.

B.11. Shiqmona. The bottom of the conical body was originally missing, but has been restored (fig. 2.4: 5).

Context: Unclear. According to the photograph caption in Elgavish, it derives from "Tomb B". In the text, however, he refers to musician figurines (in the plural) from City B, Stratum X. Registration no. 7146/70.

Present location: Israel Antiquities Authority. Collection no. 81–246.

Date: 9th–8th centuries BCE.

Description: Height 25 cm. Curly hair over the brow; two long winding braids coil down both sides of the face to the level of the woman's arms; in the rear; her smooth hair slips down over her back. Her facial features are very delicate. The drum is held perpendicular to the body, and tilts slightly to the right. Her left hand supports it from below, while her right hand spreads over it. The drum's rims are thickened.

Literature: Zemer 1991: 24, no. 28, fig. on p. 83, photo on p. 85; Elgavish 1994: 68, fig. 44; Kletter 1995: 5.F.2.7; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–4.

B.12. Provenance unknown. Complete figurine.

Present location: The Harvard Semitic Museum, Collection no. 5755.

Description: Height 21.8 cm; diameter at base, 8 cm. The woman's coiffure runs across her brow in a straight line, and two shocks of smooth hair slip past her face on either side to her chest. The hair is painted black. The facial features are delicate and also enhanced with black. The drum is held perpendicular to the body and tilts to the right; the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand spreads over it. The drum's rim is thickened and painted in red. The hollow, conical, also painted red has a number of vertical black stripes, giving the impression of a skirt.

Literature: Meyers 1987: 116–117, pl. 7a; Meyers 1991: 16; Kletter 1995: 5.F.2.9; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–9.

B.13. Provenance unknown. Complete figurine.

Present location: The Israel Museum (Dayan Collection), Jerusalem; collection no. 82.2.7.

Description: Height 16.1 cm; diameter at base, 7 cm. Facial features detailed and delicate. The hair is drawn back behind the ears and falls in two shocks to either side of the woman's head, ending below the line of

her shoulders. The conical shaped body is hollow. The drum is held perpendicular to the body; her left hand supports it from below, while her right hand beats upon it. The drum reveals traces of red paint, and its rim is thickened.

Literature: Ornan 1986: 32–33, no. 10; Meyers 1991: photo on p. 20, left; Kletter 1995: 5.F.2.10; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–5.

B.14. Provenance unknown. Head and upper part of body.

Present location: Israel Antiquities Authority, collection no. 52.901.

Description: The coiffure consists of long braids falling behind the ears and slipping down towards the chest. The remains of the drum are held perpendicular to the body.

Comments: The photograph in Holland is of low quality.

Literature: Holland 1975: B.5.D.2, pl. 44: 1.



Figure 2.4. Type B figurines: 1. B.1 Achzib (IAA); 2. B.2 Achzib (IAA); 3. B.3 Achzib (IAA); 4. B.6 Achzib (E. Mazar); 5. B.11 Shiqmona (IAA).

2.3. Type C: Women Drummer Figurines of the Hybrid Types

C.1. Tell Jemmeh. Head and upper part of body.

Context: Unknown.

Description: The body is hollow. Curls are arrayed in several rows around the head in a crescent-shaped coiffure. The head is also surrounded by a frame of clay, perhaps the vestige of mould manufacture, but it is also possible that a headdress is intended. The hands hold a large clay disk opposite the body to the left side of the chest. The woman's right breast is salient.

Comments: The hollow body is reminiscent of Type B, and the coiffure is also similar to that of some northern figurines. However, the upper part of the present figurine is mould-made, and the manner in which she holds the drum is closer to that of the plaque figurines (Type A).

Literature: Petrie 1928: pl. 35: 14; Pritchard 1943: V: 167; Holland 1975: B.5.D.1; Kletter 1995: 5.C.5.3.

C.2. Megiddo. Almost complete figurine.⁹

Context: The "Palace" – Stratum V in Schumacher's excavations.

Description: A hollow, wheel-made body. The numerous incisions in the coiffure – vertical over the brow, and horizontal to either side of the face – signify hair. The facial features are very coarse. The woman is apparently wearing an ornament on her forehead between the eyes. The drum is held opposite the chest; the left hand holds it from below, while the right hand touches it. The fingers are depicted.

Comments: The body's lower part is wheel-made, like the Phoenician figurines of Type B (see above), while its upper part, the head, and the manner in which the drum is held are closer to the plaque figurines of Type A (see above).

Literature: Schumacher 1908: 102, fig. 156; Pritchard 1943: V: 163; Holland 1975: B.5.C.3; Kletter 1995: 5.C.6.1.

C.3–8. Qitmit. Figurine fragments of drums and hands (fig. 2.5: 1).

Context: Three fragments were found on the surface; C.4 (Beck 1995: no. 194) in Locus 30; C.5 (ibid.: no. 195) in Locus 24; and C.6 (ibid.: no. 196) in Locus 44.

Date: End of 7th century – beginning of 6th century BCE.

Description: About 3–5 cm in diameter; varying thickness. Some of the fragments have traces of red paint, and one is outlined in black paint. Four of the fragments include vestiges of hands attached to the disk. In

⁹ Kletter counts five figurines from Megiddo which he interprets as hollow women drummers. However, since only the heads were retrieved, I have not included them in my list.

C.3 (*ibid.*: no. 193), the drum is held between the fingers of the left hand and the thumb, whereby the fingers are denoted by grooves. On the other side, near the edge, a thickened salient possibly comprises the remains of the right hand. C.4 has both hands on the drum. The drum of C.5 is held by the fingers of one hand; it is possible that the drum is damaged slightly in the middle, where the second hand was plausibly attached. C.8 (*ibid.*: no. 198) shows the remains of one hand. Judging by the style, the workmanship, and the colouring, it seems that some fragments were modelled in the round.

Comments: The identification of these fragments as musical instruments is reinforced by the fragmentary figurine of a clay plaque depicting a lyre, together with the musician's hand. Not one of the present fragments was attached to the body of a figurine, but in view of their connexion with hands, and the fact that some of the drums were modelled in the round, one can infer that they were attached to figurines like those of Type B. It should be noted that Qitmit yielded figurines with a solid head and hollow body, but these fragments did not include any indication of drums, and thus cannot be considered musicians.

Literature: Beck 1995: 162–168, nos. 193–198, fig. 3.112.

C.9. Samaria. Head and upper part of body.

Context: Area Q, Square N, royal Israelite quarter on summit of tell. Exact provenance unknown. The registration no. assigned by the excavators, Q4629.

Description: Height of fragment, 10.5 cm. A woman with a headdress or coiffure parted down the middle. Ornament over the brow. Very accentuated and drawn-out almond-shaped eyes; a wide nose. The drum is held at an angle to the body; the left hand supports it from below, and the fingers can be distinguished. The drum is broken.

Comments: In the excavation report, this object is described as a “pillar figurine”. The position in which she holds the drum is similar to that of the Type B figurines (see above), but the modelling of the head is closer to that of the drummers defined as Type A plaque figurines (see above).

Literature: Crowfoot *et al.* 1957: 79, no. 6, pl. XI: 8; Holland 1975: B.5.E.1; Beck 1990: note 3: 18; 1999: table 7: 2: 16; Kletter 1995: 5.C.6.7; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig. 190e; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–7.

C.10. Tell el-Mazar. Body fragment (fig. 2.5: 2).

Context: H.3.6.

Present location: Jordan University, Irbid.

Date: 7th–6th centuries BCE.

Description: Hollow, conical body. Height 9 cm; diameter 3.2 cm. The drum is held perpendicular to the body; the left hand supports its bottom, while the right hand plays upon it. The fingers are indicated by grooves.

Literature: Amr 1980: no. 30, pl. 5: 1; Kletter 1995: 4.A.8.

C.11–12. Nebo (Khirbet el-Mukhayyat). Two complete figurines.

Context: Tomb 84.

Present location: Possibly in the Franciscan Biblical Museum, Jerusalem.

Date: Iron II, on the basis of the tomb artefacts.

Description: Hollow pillar body, with a ledge above the base – possibly denoting a dress. The heads are also hollow. The mould-produced face is encircled by a coiffure with bangs over the brow and two coiling braids which slip behind the ears and fall over the shoulders. The drum is held perpendicular to the body in the middle of the chest; the woman's right hand spreads over it. The fingers are shown. The breasts are represented by saliences.

Comments: Holland remarked upon the similarity between these figurines and the Type B figurines (see above).

Literature: Saller 1966: 260–262, fig. 28: 1–2, M.1072, M.2001; Holland 1975: 146f, B.5.B.2–3; Kletter 1995: 4.A.1–2, fig. 12b: 1–2.

C.13. 'Ain Jenin (next to Buseirah). An almost complete figurine (fig. 2.5: 3).

Context: Listed as “unstratified”, possibly a surface find.

Date: Iron II.

Description: Light clay with many grits. A figurine bearing an oil-lamp on its head. The lamp comprises a kind of headdress or hat. The upper part of the figurine is hand-made, whereas the hollow body expanding towards the bottom is wheel-made. The facial features are coarse. The round eyes are fashioned from small bits of fastened-on clay. A triangle attached to the chin indicates a beard, but the figure also has salient breasts. It holds a drum against the body, in the middle, underneath the breasts. It is held by both hands, which extend to it from the sides. The fingers are denoted by grooves. There are traces of black paint on the figurine.

Comments: The figurine is hermaphrodite, and Beck proposed a thematic connexion between it and the figurine from Tel 'Ira (A.23, see above). The hollow, wheel-made body recalls the Type B figurines (see above); however, the upper body and its manner of holding the drum are closer to the figurines of Type A (see above).

Literature: Amr 1980: no. 31; Homes-Fredericq 1987: fig. 3; Beck 1990: fig. 12; 1999: fig. 7.7: 11.

C.14. Amman (Jebel Qal'ah). Head and upper part of body.

Context: Surface find.

Present location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman, collection no. J12327.

Description: Height, 4.5 cm; width, 3.1 cm. The woman's hair falls behind her ears to the level of her shoulders. It is painted black. There are traces of red paint on her forehead and eyes. The nose and mouth are damaged.

Her right shoulder and arm and left hand are broken. The fragment of a drum-like object lies against her chest.

Comments: Amr does not identify the object as a drum, and Kletter raises the possibility that it forms part of the woman's chest. However, the way in which it is joined to the body (being perpendicular to it and slightly tilted), suggests to me that it can be construed as the fragment of a drum.

Literature: Amr 1980: no. 82; Dornemann 1983: fig. 89: 2; Kletter 1995: 4.A.3.

C.15–16. Amman. Two fragments of clay disks with the remains of hands.

Context: Tomb F.

Present location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman, collection no. ATH 66–3.

Description: In both instances, the left hand supports the drum from the side, while the right hand spreads over it.

Comments: Observe the similarity of these artefacts to the fragments of drums with hands from Qitmit (C.3–8, above).

Literature: Dornemann 1983: 132f, fig. 87: 6–7; Braun 1999: fig. IV/1–16a–b.

C.17. Tell er-Rumeith. Body fragment (fig. 2.5: 4).

Context: Exact Context unknown. Stratum 7.

Date: 9th century BCE.

Present location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman, registration no. unknown.

Description: Height, 10 cm; Width of body, c. 5.5 cm. Indentations on the figurine indicate a necklace. The drum is held by both hands to the left side of the chest, almost parallel to it, but tilted slightly outwards towards the top. The conical body is hollow.

Literature: Amr 1980: no. 29, pl. 4: 4; Kletter 1995: 4.A.6.

C.18. Tell er-Rumeith. Body fragment.

Context: Exact provenance unknown. Stratum 12.

Date: 10th–7th centuries BCE.

Present location: National Archaeological Museum, Amman, registration no. unknown.

Description: The figurine is hand-made. The body is hollow. The right hand spreads over the drum, while the left hand approaches its rim.

Literature: Amr 1980: no. 12; Kletter 1995: 4.A.7.

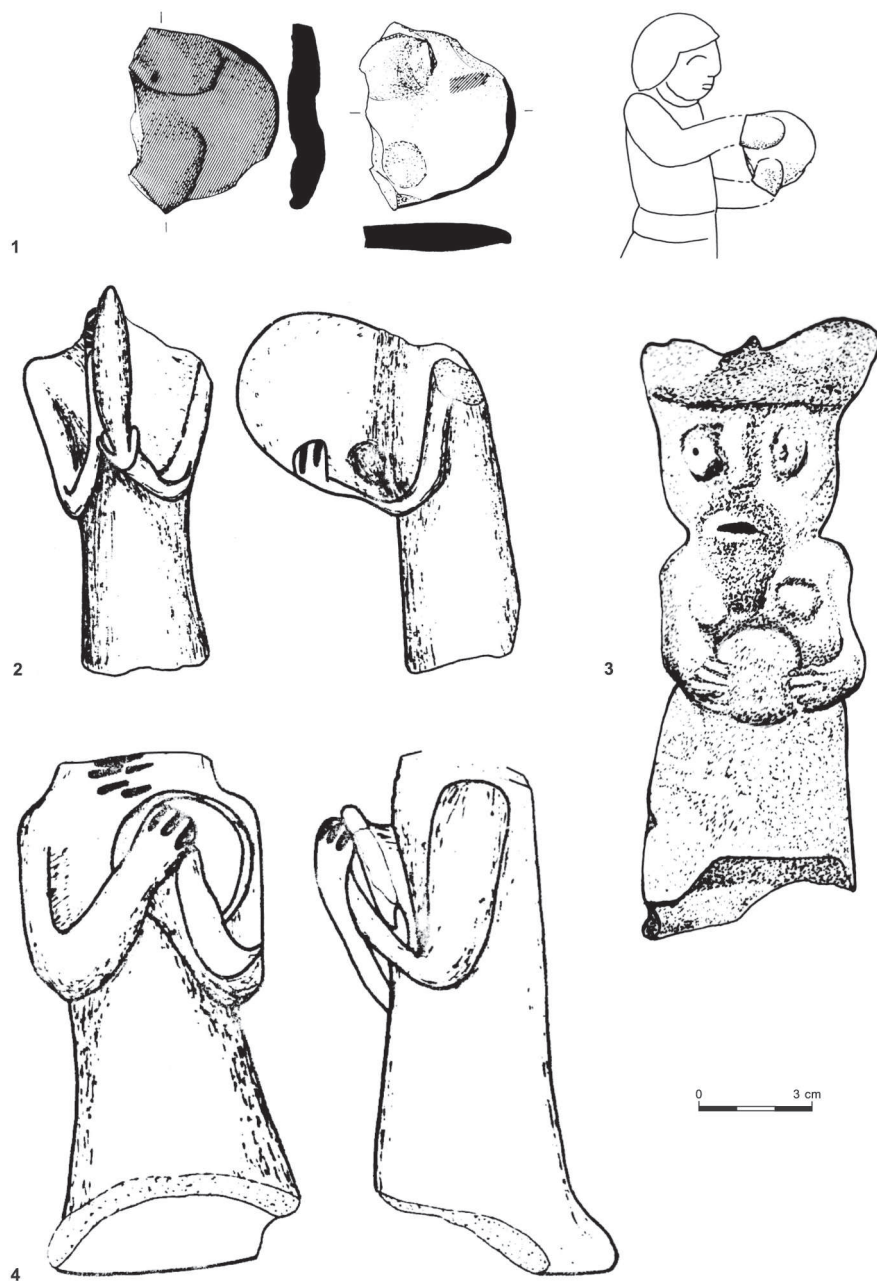


Figure 2.5. Type C figurines: 1. C.4 Qitmit: Drums fragment with hands, and suggested reconstruction (after Beck 1995: figs. 3.112: 194, 3.113: a); 2. C.10 Tell el-Mazar (Amr 1980: no. 30); 3. C.13 'Ain Jenin (Beck 1999: fig. 7.7: 11); 4. C.17 Tell er-Rumeit (Amr 1980: no. 29).

2.4. Stand of the Musicians

Ashdod. An almost complete cultic stand with musician figurines (fig. 2.6).

Context: Area H/K, the tell's acropolis. Locus 5356, adjoining the wall, a precinct of cultic character. Stratum X. Israel Antiquities Authority, registration no. 68.1182.

Present location: The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Date: End of 11th or beginning of 10th century BCE.

Description: A pottery cultic stand comprising a deep carinated bowl resting on a high cylindrical body. Height of stand 34.7 cm; diameter at base, 14.2 cm; diameter at rim, 16.2 cm. The stand, of well-baked clay, reveals traces of white slip. The bowl is decorated with a pattern in red and black paint over the slip. In the body of the stand, above the base, there are three arch-shaped openings. These are surmounted by five figures encircling the middle of the body. Four of these are three-dimensional, and are set in rectangular windows. Their bottom portion serves to fix them in place, while their upper portion is quite realistic, albeit schematic. The heads are large in relation to the bodies, and both the eyes and nose are large and prominent. They hold different musical instruments: a double-flute, a lyre, and a small hand drum. The drum is held in a position familiar from the various figurines, whereby the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand plays upon it. The fourth figure is apparently holding cymbals. The fifth figure is larger and modelled differently, both in terms of style and technique. Part of the body was fashioned by incising into the vessel, producing a cut-out, while the other part was applied. This figure has legs. Its face is grotesque and the head is flat, but similar in style to the other figures. The eyes and jutting ears are asymmetrical. It plays a double-flute, broken at the end. The sex of the figures is difficult to determine. However, in the absence of feminine hallmarks, it seems that they should be identified as males. Above the musicians, a parade of animals is depicted in a technique combining incision and relief.

Literature: M. Dothan 1970a: 94–95; 1970b: 310–311; T. Dothan 1982: 249–251, pl. 33; Braun 1994: no. 5, 1999: fig. IV/4–1a–f; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 123–4, fig. 149b; Mazar and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 38–42, pl. 2.10; Ben-Shlomo 2005b: 180–184, figs. 3.76–78.



Figure 2.6. The Musicians' Stand of Ashdod: Drawing (Ben-Shlomo 2005b: fig. 3.76) and Photo (IAA).

Chapter 3

Analysis of the Archaeological Data

3.1. Plaque Figurines of a Woman Holding a Round Object

3.1.1. History of Research

In the early 1940s, Pritchard (1943) classified all the then-known figurines from Eretz-Israel. There were some 300, which he divided into eight categories. His Class V comprised 14 figurines holding a round object. He tried to identify them with ancient Near Eastern goddesses, but did not broach the question of the object's nature.

Since then, the number of figurines belonging to this class has grown considerably, and several dozen are presently known. Various scholars have attempted to identify the figurines and the round object in their hands.

Among the important studies from the end of the 1960s and beginning of the '70s, one should mention Ruth Amiran's essay (1967) on the figurine from Gezer holding a round object and Hillers' essay (1970), "The Goddess with the Tambourine". In 1975, Holland's doctorate was published; it was followed by his comprehensive article on clay figurines from Eretz-Israel (Holland 1975; 1977). Engle's doctorate (1979), mainly concerned with pillar figurines, also relates to those of the type under discussion. In 1980, Amr's doctorate was published; it discussed, *inter alias*, such figurines from Transjordan. In the 1990s, Pirhiya Beck treated various figurines of this type (Beck 1990; 1999). Kletter (1995; 1996) also considered them in the context of his doctorate.

The figurine type of the woman holding a round object remains controversial among scholars, both regarding her identity and the object's. In 4.1, I will consider the object's identification as a drum, and review the various interpretations concerning the woman's identity.

3.1.2. Typology

The figurines belonging to this class depict a woman holding a round object in her hands. She is sometimes naked, at others partially or fully clothed. She usually has a headdress, tunic, or scarf, and most of the women are adorned with jewellery of some kind, such as necklaces, armlets, bracelets, and anklets.

According to Keel and Uehlinger (1998: 164), the tendency to dress the figurines increases steadily in the course of the Iron Age. This claim seems to me doubtful, however, in view of the problems attending the exact dating of a large percentage of the finds (see below). Furthermore, as an instance of this trend, they cite A.8 from Gezer (fig. 2.1: 6), ascribed to the 8th century BCE. But this figurine lacks the entire lower portion of her body, from the arms down, and, due to the striking resemblance of its details to A.7, also from Gezer (fig. 2.1: 5), in which one plainly sees the genitals and pregnant belly, I cannot accept their opinion that the woman is fully clothed.

At times, the sexual features, especially the female breasts, are stressed. In A.7, A.12, A.16, A.23, A.51, A.52, A.59–60, A.65, and in the mould from Taanach (A.35), the female genitals are also stressed. In A.7 and A.13, the pregnant belly is prominent. In at least one instance, A.42 from Tel 'Ira (fig. 2.2: 10), the female breasts are combined with male genitals and possibly a beard (Beck 1990: 87). For a discussion of this issue, see below.

One figurine (A.5 from Beth Shean, fig. 2.1: 3) depicts a woman holding a child in addition to a drum. This attests to some connexion with the group of figurines of a woman with a child, also found at various sites in Israel from the period concerned. I will treat this issue later in greater detail.

In these figurines, close attention is paid to the details – from the facial features to the fingers and toes.

The round object is held against the body, generally against the left side of the chest (Meyers 1987: 118–119; Beck 1990: 87; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 164). In only five instances (A.1, A.15, A.32, A.64, and apparently A.48) is it held against the middle of the chest. As a rule, the left hand supports the object at its bottom or side, while the right hand touches or rests upon its top. Only in A.1, A.32 and apparently A.48 does the figure hold it in both hands.

In many of the figurines the rim of the round object is stressed and adorned, giving the impression of a drum frame (this admittedly anticipates my conclusion, see discussion below, 4.1.1). At times the decoration covers the entire object. It seems that these smooth frames are accentuated in 12 of the figurines (A.9, A.10, A.16, A.23, A.24, A.28, A.46, A.49, A.50, A.65, and apparently A.59–60). In 13 instances, the frames are stressed and decorated with designs in dots or small circles (e.g., A.7, A.8, A.12, A.27, A.33, A.37 and A.38, and A.47). On the mould from Taanach (A.35, fig. 2.2: 7), in addition to dots around the rim, there is a kind of cross on the surface. A.55 has dots on the middle of the object. In six figurines it is possible to distinguish a geometrical design of zigzags or triangles on the rim (e.g., A.26, A.36 and A.45). On occasion there is another circle beyond the rim which apparently represents the drum's wooden frame (A.12, A.36, A.45, A.51, A.52 and A.56).

Two figurines (A.59–60) appear together on either side of the opening in the ceramic model of a shrine (fig. 2.3: 7)¹⁰. This circumstance is important for interpreting the meaning of the figurines, as I will show in 4.1.2.

Kletter (1995: 94) maintains that it is possible to distinguish differences within the group, whereby the mould-made figurines, which are deeper, coarser, less decorated, and hold the object in both hands, originate in Transjordan and represent a later phase of the Iron Age. It is true that, generally speaking, the figurines from Transjordan are coarser in their modelling, but the date of most of them is uncertain or unknown, and thus a chronological distinction is problematic.

3.1.3. Archaeological Parallels

Mesopotamia has produced a large number of plaque figurines, including those of women holding flat, round objects (Rimmer 1969: 23, Pl. IV.a–c). Such figurines are mould-made (Collon 1995: 101). There is a general resemblance between them, but the details differ. The figurines are sometimes naked or partially dressed with a skirt or cloth around the hips. Some have decoration on the shoulders. Some wear a headdress, others a crown with three horns. As a rule, there is one or more necklaces. The women usually hold the round object beneath their chest, but sometimes above it. Some are slightly or excessively fat (Rimmer 1969: 23).

These figurines were dated to the Early Babylonian period, that is to say, the 2nd millennium BCE (Rimmer 1969: 24; Collon 1995: 101).

These figurines are very similar to the plaque figurines from Iron Age Israel and Transjordan, and in their case, as well, scholars are divided, especially concerning their identity (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 166).

In view of the greater antiquity of the Mesopotamian figurines and the contacts between this region and Eretz-Israel, one can suggest that the conceptual-artistic inspiration for figurines of this type is Mesopotamian. Nevertheless, it does not appear that the Iron Age figurines found in Israel originated there, mainly owing to the considerable chronological gap between the Babylonian figurines and their Israelite counterparts.

¹⁰ Temple shrines in pottery appear in the Late Bronze and Iron Age in Eretz-Israel, on the Phoenician coast, in the Valley of Lebanon, in Cyprus, and in Transjordan (A. Mazar 1985: 15; see references there). They generally feature an ornamented architectural façade, but without figures (*ibid.*). However, there are two close parallels of temple models with women drummers on the front: Lebanon has produced a small shrine on whose façade are two naked women adorned with necklaces and exhibiting a complex coiffure, their hands holding their bellies (Culican 1978: 53, pl. 50; A. Mazar 1985: 15.); and on the façade of a shrine from Moab one sees the heads and upper torso of two women (Weinberg 1978: 30–32; A. Mazar 1985: 15). However, the model under discussion is the only one in which women drummers are depicted.

3.1.4. Dating

The figurines first appear in Eretz-Israel at the beginning of Iron Age II, and continue, with minor changes, throughout the period (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 163–164). One should bear in mind that in many instances the provenance or stratigraphic ascription of the figurines is unknown, whereby they cannot be dated.

In accord with the accepted chronological framework (see 1.5) and the dating assigned by the excavators of the various sites, three of the figurines were found in strata dating to the 11th century BCE, but their stratigraphic ascription is uncertain; six are dated generally to the Iron Age II, 12 are from the 10th century BCE, that is to say, Iron Age IIA; six are dated approximately to the 10th–9th centuries BCE; nine to Iron Age IIB; eight are apparently from the 9th century BCE; six from the 8th century BCE; and two from the first half of the 7th century BCE, that is to say, Iron Age IIC.

Finkelstein's low chronology (see 1.5) is liable to defer the first appearance in Israel of figurines of this type by about a century.

3.1.5. Spatial Distribution (fig. 3.1)

Figurines of this type have been found at numerous sites in Israel and Transjordan (see, for instance, Beck 1990: 87–88). In northern Israel and in the valleys, examples occur at Hazor (A.9, A.10), Rosh Pina (A.31), Khirbet Nesiba (A.12), Tel Hadar (A.41) and Tel Dover (A.37–40). Numerous figurines have been found *in situ* at Megiddo (A.14–22), Taanach (A.35), Tel 'Amal (A.36), Delhamiya (A.6), Beth Shean (A.2–5) and Rehov (A.23–30). Several have been found in the region of Samaria: at the site of Samaria itself (A.32–34) at Tell el-Far'ah (North) (A.45, A.46), Khirbet Umm el-Butm (A.13), and Jatt (A.11). In the centre of the country, figurines are known from Gezer (A.7, A.8) and Aphek (A.1). In Transjordan, they have been found at Irbid (A.55), Dibon (A.48), Deir 'Alla (A.49–52), Heshbon (A.54), at sites in the vicinity of Mount Nebo (A.53, A.61), at Amman (A.47), and at sites in the vicinity of Kerak (A.56–60). Finally, such figurines have been found at Tell 'Ira (A.42) and Tel Malhata (A.43, A.44) in the eastern Negev.

It seems that these figurines are mainly characteristic of the Kingdom of Israel, while not appearing in Judah at all, except for the sites in the eastern Negev (see map on fig. 3.1). It would appear that their occurrence here results from the ties between this region and Transjordan, where such figurines are common throughout Iron Age II.

3.1.6. The Connexion between Spatial Distribution and Dating

The available data indicate that the majority of Iron Age IIA figurines derive from sites in the north of the country, including the eastern valleys, and only one example (A.1 from Aphek) comes from the centre. In Iron Age IIB figurines occur more frequently in the centre (e.g., A.7 and A.8 from Gezer)

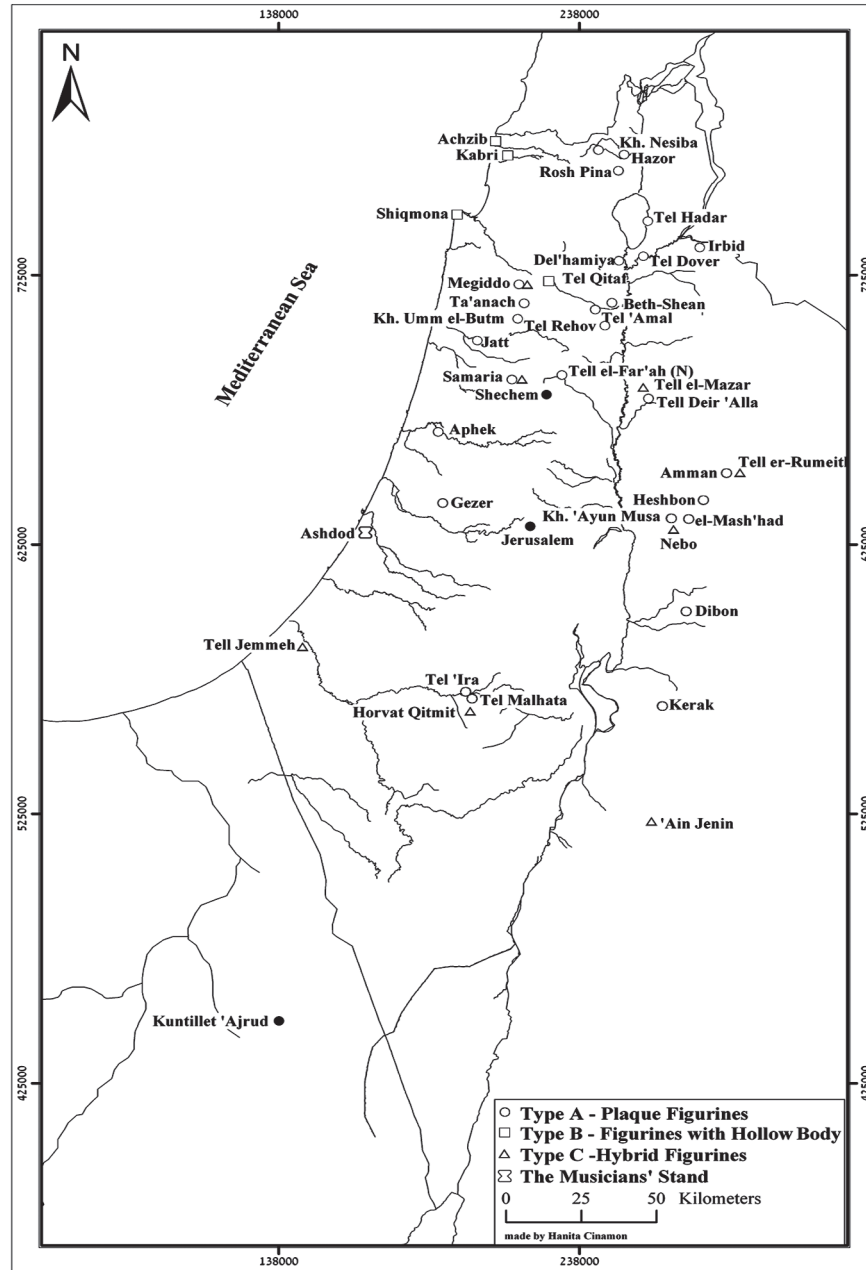


Figure 3.1. Spatial distribution map of the drummers' figurines from Eretz-Israel and Transjordan (H. Zion-Cinamon).

and south (A.43 and A.44 from Tel Malhata in the eastern Negev). There are also figurines of this period in Transjordan (e.g., A.50 from Deir 'Alla). In Iron IIC we have the figurine (A.42) from Tel 'Ira in the Negev.

Although we lack information concerning the context and date of most of the Transjordanian figurines, on the basis of the data I have presented and in view of the connexion between the figurines of the type under discussion and the hybrid figurines (Type C) discovered in Transjordan, for which the information relevant to dating is far greater, I should like to suggest the following model: Plaque figurines of a woman holding a round object first appeared in the north of Eretz-Israel, whence they spread by degrees to the south and east. They reached Transjordan by way of the eastern valleys. At a later stage they reached southern Transjordan and the eastern Negev. This is mainly evinced by the resemblance (attesting to obvious influence) between the figurines of the eastern Negev and the plaque figurines as well as some of the hybrid figurines of Transjordan (see Beck 1990: 92).

The dating of the figurines in combination with their spatial distribution indicates that, at the outset, they were common in the Kingdom of Israel and in the Transjordanian kingdoms, while in Judah they were absent, except for a few examples from the Negev. The significance of this spatio-chronological pattern will be considered later (6.1).

3.1.7. The Technique of Manufacture and Aspects of Mass Production

Figurines of this type were made by being pressed into a one-piece open mould. Such a mould was found at Taanach (A.35), attesting to this method. The front of the figurines was pressed, while the back was flat and smoothed down by diverse means. In several instances it was possible to distinguish signs of smoothing with the aid of a sharp implement or stone-burnishing (A.12, A.14, A.23–27, A.33, A.37–39, A.42, A.43, A.44 and A.45). In others, excess margins were left in place around the actual figurine (A.39, A.43, A.44, and A.45); at times they were even decorated (A.7 and A.8 from Gezer).

The technique of mould manufacture probably originated in Mesopotamia, since plaque figurines already appear there and in Syria in the 3rd millennium BCE (Kletter 1995: 137; Spycket 1992: 36, 54, 233f).

The open, one-piece mould allows for multiple reuse, and thus for mass production of the clay figurines. Several scholars have suggested that their mass production played a meaningful role in the domestic cult of the Iron Age (see below). However, a careful examination of the extant figurines indicates that, their general resemblance notwithstanding, there are differences in the details, and nearly all of them were made in separate moulds. In only a few cases is it arguable that they were produced in the same mould: A.7 and A.8 from Gezer, A.14 and A.15 from Megiddo, A.16 and A.17 from Megiddo, A.37 and A.38 from Tel Dover, A.39 and A.40 from Tel Dover, A.43 and A.44 from Tel Malhata, A.51 and A.52 from Deir 'Alla, and A.59–60 on the

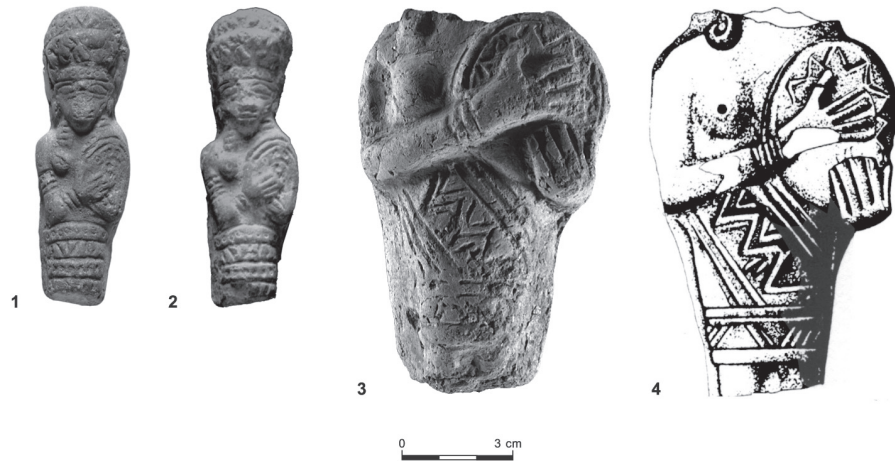


Figure 3.2. Two pairs of identical figurines produced in the same mould, and discovered in different sites: 1. A.27 from Rehov (Hebrew University) and 2. A.2 from Beth Shean (IAA); 3. A.26 from Rehov (Hebrew University) and 4. A.45 from Tell el-Far'ah (N) (Chambon 1984: pl. 63: 2).

model shrine from the Kerak region. There are two cases of identical figurines which were produced in the same mould, but were found in different sites: A.27 from Rehov and A.2 from nearby Beth Shean (fig. 3.2: 1–2) and A.26 from Rehov and A.45 from Tell el-Far'ah (North) (fig. 3.2: 3–4).

Only in Rehov there are three figurines from the same mould (A.23, A.24, and A.25). This raises doubts about the issue of their mass production. Is it possible that the figurines were, after all, exceptional objects, by no means as widespread as hitherto supposed?

3.1.8. The Archaeological Context

For many of the figurines, the information concerning the context is fragmentary or very general; sometimes it is lacking altogether. And even when the context is specified, there is no assurance that the stratigraphic ascription is exact.

Numerous questions can be asked about the context: Does it inform us about the significance of the figurines, or vice versa? Can the location of the figurine's discovery tell us about its owner? Do all the figurines of this type represent the same or different figures? And was the figurine's use uniform or did it vary according to the context? Is it arguable, for instance, that a figurine found in a shrine had religious significance, that another found in a house served a domestic cult, while yet another found in a tomb was a sepulchral offering? I shall try to answer these questions in the following.

Kletter (1995: 146) contends that fragments should be distinguished from complete figurines, since the latter's place of discovery was also their place

of use, whereas the fragments attest to patterns of disposal after the figurines had served their purpose.

Plaque figurines of the type under discussion were found in both domestic and sacred contexts. Among the complete figurines it is known that the one from Tel 'Ira (A.42) was retrieved from the room of a public building near the gate. In two instances it is possible to connect figurines with a cultic context: A.22 from Megiddo was found in a room in a precinct identified as sacred; and the mould from Taanach (A.35) was found in the destruction layer of a cultic structure. A.23 from Rehov was found in a room in a building. The room yielded many finds attesting various female domestic activities, such as food preparation and weaving.

At Aphek an almost complete figurine (A.1) was found in a domestic context; it was interred in a four-room house. It is possible that it was buried there after being damaged, whereby it could not be of any further service; however, in view of its importance, it was buried rather than discarded. A.27 from Rehov was also found in a domestic context. Another almost complete figurine, from Tel Hadar (A.41), was found in a refuse dump in the vicinity of the city wall; it appears to have been tossed there after being withdrawn from use.

Among the fragments whose provenance is known, two derive from tombs (A.18, a complete body from Megiddo, and A.55 from Irbid). According to Kletter (1995: 47, 50), one would expect a tomb to yield a complete figurine. However, since the separation of the head from the body is a common breakage pattern, it is conceivable that the excavators found the fragment of a formerly complete figurine which was placed in the tomb, while, for whatever reason, the rest was not recovered.

Four figurine fragments derive from shrines. But the stratigraphic ascription and exact location of three of them (A.3, A.4, and apparently A.15) within the context are unclear. A.21 was found in a room of Structure 338 at Megiddo, evidently a cultic building or a cultic chamber in a palace (Ussishkin 1989: 149–172; Stern 1990: 102–107). Nevertheless, it appears that the provenance of these fragments attests to their use.

As to figurine fragments from public buildings: A.34 was found in a room in the Ostraca House at Samaria, and A.48 was found in a room near the palace at Dibon. Here, too, it seems that the provenance of the fragments was also their place of use. For instance, the fragment from the so-called Ostraca House, which was a storage structure (Avigad 1993: 1300–1310), could have been in the possession of one of the officials employed there.

Seven fragments were found in rooms of residential structures (A.20, A.24, A.25, A.26, A.43, A.44, and A.45). A.29 was found in an open courtyard which is part of a residential unit. A.46 was found on the fringes of a structure of unknown function. These fragments possibly belong to figurines which were damaged in times of crisis (e.g., war or conflagration), when the residents were obliged to flee in confusion. For this reason, the figurines were abandoned in the house. Since at least one complete figurine

comes from a residence, it is clear that they were used in some domestic capacity, which also accounts for the fragments which were tossed near their place of use (Kletter 1995: 151).

In an open paved courtyard in the vicinity of Palace 1723 at Megiddo, the body of a headless but otherwise complete figurine (A.16) was found. Further figurines from open areas at other sites include A.19, from a paved precinct with some construction; A.30 and A.9, from streets; and A.10. The discovery of these fragments in open courtyards or streets suggests that they were tossed outside after being broken, since the disposal of refuse in the streets was an accepted practice during this period (Kletter 1995: 152–153).

Additional figurines were found on the surface, in fills, and in diverse earthen deposits. It is reasonable to assume that these represent secondary contexts whose function, in many cases unclear, does not attest to the figurines' original location (*ibid.*: 153–154).

A review of the various archaeological contexts yielding figurines indicates that they served in a variety of human enterprises.

3.2. Figurines of Women Drummers with a Hollow, Conical Body

3.2.1. History of Research

These figurines already appear in the reports and surveys of the finds from Eretz-Israel in the 1930s and '40s (see, for instance, Jones 1948). Holland mentions them in his doctorate and in his comprehensive article based on it (Holland 1975; 1977). Engle (1979) also relates to figurines of this type. Amr (1980), in his doctorate on the figurines from Transjordan, discusses, *inter alias*, of figurines similar to those under review.¹¹

Figurines of this type are mentioned by Bathja Bayer (1963; 1982), who surveyed the archaeological finds from Eretz-Israel connected with music. Pirhiya Beck related to this type in her discussion of plaque figurines of women holding a round object (Beck 1990; 1999). The principal study of women drummer figurines with a hollow body was undertaken by Carol Meyers (1987; 1991). It reflects the feminist approach to archaeology, in contrast to earlier research, which mainly stressed iconography. According to Meyers (1988: 162), the very fact that these figurines represent women or symbols of womanhood makes them part of the female world. They aid us, she contends, in the reconstruction of female participation in religious life and link women to the domestic cult (*ibid.*: 161). In her work and in the feminist studies of others, especially in the field of the Old Testament, the desire to amend the male slant of the text is pronounced. This will be discussed at greater length below.

¹¹ I have assigned the figurines from Amr's doctorate to Class C, since their characteristics differ from those under discussion here.

3.2.2. Typology

The figurines of this class differ from plaque figurines in their mode of manufacture, in their modelling, and in the manner in which they hold the round object.

The present class includes figurines of clothed women who hold a round object. The base is hollow, conical, and wheel-made, while the other parts – the head, neck, arms, and the round object – are hand-made. The facial features are delicate, and great attention is paid to the details; that the faces were often produced in moulds. The hands, in contrast to the face, are schematic, and the fingers are not shown. The hair is twisted into two braids on either side of the face (B.11, B.14; see fig. 2.4: 5) or is long and simple (B.1–4, B.12, and apparently B.13; see also example in fig. 2.4: 1–3). In three of the figurines (B.5, B.6, B.10) the coiffure is different, with short braids or curls, while the hair is cut straight across the brow (fig. 2.4: 4). In general, the women have no headdress. The base serves as a kind of dress or skirt, and the style is plain. Some of the figurines have an ornament in one or two colours – black and/or red (B.6, B.11, and B.12). The round object is held vertically (B.1, B.2, B.4, B.12, B.13) or at a slight angle *vis-à-vis* the body (B.3, B.6, B.9, B.10, B.11), whereby the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand presses against it. Its rim is sometimes stressed by means of thickening (B.1, B.2, B.6, B.11, B.12) and colour (B.11, B.12), creating a kind of frame (Meyers 1987: 116–120).

3.2.3. Archaeological Parallels

The Phoenician Coast – As mentioned above, these figurines apparently originated here, where they have been found chiefly in cultic contexts, as affirmed by the excavators for the figurines from Helalieh, near Sidon, and for some of the finds from Kharayeb, which come from a refuse pit in a temple courtyard (Chehab 1951–54, pl. 1: 4; Bayer 1963: 14–15). Tyre has also yielded a figurine of this type. It depicts a woman drummer with twisted braids (Bikai 1978: pl. LXXXI: 2), like the figurine from Shiqmona. Further examples of this type have been found at Sarepta (Pritchard 1988: fig. 11: 28, 29).

Cyprus – Figures very similar to those of the women drummers of the coastal type from Israel have been found at various sites in Cyprus from periods concurrent with Israel's Iron Age. Most derive from Kition, where there was a large Phoenician colony (see, for instance, Gehrig and Niemayer 1990: 147, no. 63), but Amathus and Tamassos also yielded some (Vandenabeele 1989: 269). Meyers (1991: 20) contends that scores, even hundreds, of such figurines have been found in tombs, temples, and other cultic sites. According to others, however, the actual number of female drummers from Cyprus is very small (Karageorghis 1987: 17, n. 13, see references there; E. Mazar 1996: 101). It is possible that Meyers is referring to all the figurines made by a similar technique, not simply those of female

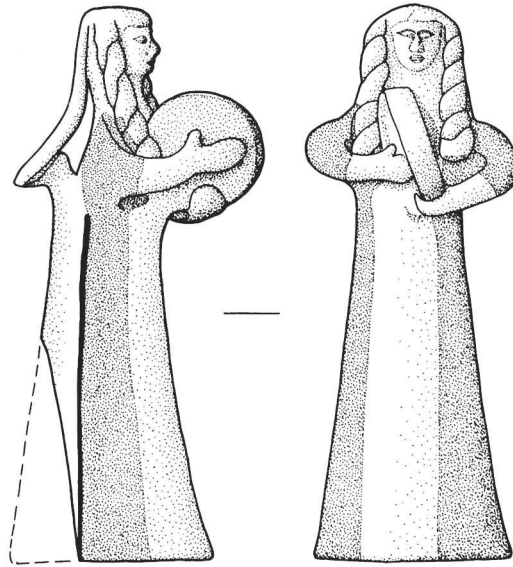


Figure 3.3. Woman drummer figurine from Cyprus (Karageorghis 1998: fig. 34).

drummers, or that she simply omitted to corroborate the data. A tomb in Amathus yielded the figurine of a woman drummer with twisted braids (fig. 3.3) (Karageorghis 1987: 17, fig. 1); and another with short hair from the 7th century BCE was found at Tamassos (Schmidt 1968: 84, pl. 91). Their technical and artistic characteristics are identical to those of the figurines from Israel and the Phoenician coast, and sometimes it is difficult to ascertain if they are of local manufacture (Gubel 1991: 134–137), as can be seen from the examples in fig. 3.3. The figurines from Cyprus are dated to the Archaic period, i.e., the middle of the 8th century BCE at the earliest. But the best parallels to the figurines from Israel are from the beginning of the 7th century BCE on (Karageorghis 1978: 68–75). As I have already noted, although the number of figurines from Cyprus is considerably greater than that from Eretz-Israel and Phoenicia, it nonetheless appears, on the basis of their dating and mode of manufacture that they derive from Phoenician archetypes. Several scholars contend that the use of the mould in producing parts of the figurine (in some cases the entire figurine) reached Cyprus through the agency of the Phoenicians (Vanderabeele 1989: 266). Following the latter's arrival on the island, new types appeared in the Cypriote repertoire. The woman holding a round object (the woman drummer) was one of the most popular (ibid. 1986; 1989: 268). Such figurines were readily transplanted to the fertile soil of the

local religious and coroplastic traditions.¹² Nevertheless, it appears that the thematic and technical inspiration for this form reached Cyprus from the area of Israel-Syria (Meyers 1991: 21).

3.2.4. Dating

These figurines begin to appear in the course of Iron Age II, and continue until the Hellenistic period (Meyers 1991: 20). According to Keel and Uehlinger (1998: 166), their advent should be dated to the last part of Iron Age II. But the problematic contexts of many of these figurines oblige us to be especially cautious in fixing their exact dates. The items in the catalogue which offer clear dating are from the 9th–7th centuries BCE.

Finkelstein's low chronology is liable to defer their appearance by about half a century; nevertheless, they remain within the span of the 9th–7th centuries BCE.

3.2.5. Spatial Distribution (fig. 3.1)

The figurines from systematic excavations were mainly found at sites in the northern coastal region of Eretz-Israel and on the Phoenician coast (Meyers 1987: 120–121), such as Shiqmona (B.11), Achzib (B.1–B.7), Kabri (B.8, B.9), Tyre, Kharayeb, and Sarepta (see 3.2.3). The sites in Israel yielding such figurines are marked on fig. 3.1. In addition, as noted, figurines of this and of similar types have been found in Cyprus (Meyers 1987: 120–121; 1991: 19; see 3.2.3).

It appears that this figurine type originates on the Phoenician coast, even though the number of examples known to us from Cyprus is greater. This conclusion follows from the fact that the Israelite and Lebanese figurines precede their production peak in Cyprus (Meyers 1991: 20; see 3.2.3).

3.2.6. Aspects of the Manufacture Technique

As one can infer from the description of the figurines, their mode of manufacture was complex: the hollow body was fashioned on a wheel, the face in a mould, and the other body parts and the round object were modelled by hand. This method is also familiar to us from the figurines found on Cyprus (Vandenabeele 1989: 267–268; Meerschaert 1991: 186). In view of the fact that the use of moulds for the production of clay figurines reached Cyprus by way of the Phoenicians (Vandenabeele 1989: 266), it once again seems that this technique originated on the Phoenician coast.

12 An example of a figurine with female characteristics holding a round object from the Late Bronze Age of Cyprus appears in Karageorghis 1993: 10, Cat. no. A(vi) 1. But this figurine, interpreted as a female musician playing a drum, is artistically completely different from the later figurines, and thus indicates that drumming by women was customary on the island before the arrival of the Phoenicians.

At times the head of the figurine is hollow, with a small hole in the back (B.2, B.6, and the hollow figurine from Achzib). I think we can infer that this was done in order to facilitate the passage of air and assure a good and uniform firing. This long and complex process demanded considerable skill, and one can assume that the work was carried out by expert craftsmen.

In Israel, this mode of modelling was employed for the figurines of women holding a round object and similar figurines, such as the flute-player from Achzib, as well as those of women with doves. Cyprus has yielded numerous figurines fashioned in this way, all of women holding a round object (of the type under discussion) or bearing offerings in their hands – animals or a goblet (Vandenabeele 1989: 268). Since most of these figurines represent women,¹³ I shall try to ascertain in the following whether this complex technique has any significance from the point of view of “gender technology”.

3.2.7. The Archaeological Context

In all areas of their spatial distribution, the figurines of known provenance derive from both domestic and sacred contexts (Meyers 1991: 19). In many instances, however, the archaeological context is unknown or uncertain, which greatly complicates their interpretation.

So far, all the complete figurines of known provenance from Eretz-Israel have been recovered from tombs: B.1, B.2, B.3, B.5, and B.6 come from the various cemeteries of Achzib. The discovery of complete figurines in tombs is not surprising, since, as a rule, the deceased were accompanied by complete objects, and even if the tomb was subject to continuous use, one merely pushed the previous artefacts aside or tossed them from modest heights, so that they suffered practically no damage (Kletter 1995: 147). B.1 and B.2 were recovered from the same tomb. However, since there is no information concerning their location within the tomb or the connexion between them and the other finds, it is impossible to know whether they accompanied the same deceased or different ones, or whether they were even deposited simultaneously. The only figurine for which there is detailed information is B.6 from the “Tomb of the Horsemen” from Achzib. It was found lying face-down next to the skeletal knee of an adult. However, since several other skeletons were found in the same tomb, one cannot be certain that the figurine was specifically associated with this deceased (E. Mazar 1993: 5–6). Furthermore, it is clear that it had fallen, and was no longer in its original standing position. Next to it were statuettes of equestrian riders, as well as pottery vessels and articles of jewellery (E. Mazar 1996; see fig. 3.4). These finds can aid us in ascertaining the meaning and function of the figurine, as I will explain below (8.3).

13 With the exception of the flute-playing figurine from Achzib – a male, in my opinion. I shall consider this issue further in the framework of my discussion of the identity of the figurines of this type.



Figure 3.4. Female drummer figurine (B.6, fig. 2.4: 4) with assemblage of artefacts and vessels found in the Horsemen's Tomb at Achzib (Courtesy of E. Mazar).

Almost complete figurines were found at Shiqmona (B.11) and Achzib (B.4). The provenance of the Shiqmona figurine is uncertain (see catalogue), but it possibly derives from a tomb dated to the 9th–8th centuries BCE (Elgavish 1993: 1373–1378; 1994: 68, caption to fig. 4). The context of B.4 from Achzib has not been published; however, since the excavations at the site focussed on the cemeteries, one can assume that it comes from one of the tombs.

As to the fragmentary figurines from Eretz-Israel, the upper part of the example from Tel Qitaf (B.10) was found by chance during the excavations of the fortifications, and its original location and context are unknown. The context of the body fragments from Kabri (B.8–9) has not been published. The provenance of B.13 is unknown.

3.3. Figurines of Women Drummers of the Hybrid Types

3.3.1. Typology and Manufacture Technique

I devised this category for those figurines of women holding a round object which are clearly linked thematically to the above types, but which, artistically and technically, cannot be assigned to them. Some bear characteristics combining both types; nevertheless, it appears that most drew their inspiration from Type B.

C.11–12 are very similar to Type B in their coiffure, their posture in holding the round object, and even in their mould-pressed face. They are also

totally hollow. However, the representation of the salient feminine breast does not correspond with the Type B characteristics, and is rather typical of Type A figurines.

C.14, C.17, and C.18 are also artistically akin to the figurines of Type B in their manner of holding the round object, in their coiffure, modelling, and decoration, and in their hollow conical body. But they were fashioned entirely by hand.

C.10 (fig. 2.5: 2) also has hollow, hand-made, bell-shaped body, and the round object is held perpendicular to the body. However, the hand preserved on the fragment shows the fingers, in a manner reminiscent of the plaque figurines, but altogether lacking in Type B.

Other figurines have a hollow, hand-made body, but their upper portion is mould-made, and their manner of holding the round object resembles that of the plaque figurines: e.g. C.1.

Among the examples bearing the mixed characteristics of plaque figurines and Phoenician figurines, one can cite C.2, C.13, and C.17. They possess a hollow conical body, but their other features, and their manner of holding the round object, are similar to that of the plaque figurines. C.13 from 'Ain Jenin (fig. 2.5: 3) is exceptional, both in that the figure bears an oil-lamp on its head, like a hat, and in that it has mixed sexual characteristics. I shall discuss these issues below. In figurine C.17 (fig. 2.5: 4), the figure holds the round object against the left side of the chest, as in Type A figurines. The circle around the rim of the object, as well as the depiction of the fingers, are also reminiscent of Type A.

The example from Samaria (C.9) is a hand-made pillar figurine which holds the round object in a posture characteristic of Type B, but the head and face are closer to Type A.

The eight fragments comprising a round object held by hands (C.3–8 from Qitmit, see fig. 2.5: 1, and C.15–16 from Amman) are hand-made and resemble the Type B figurines. It has been suggested that the fragments from Qitmit can be interpreted as parts of Phoenician-type figurines. Since cultic stands were discovered at the site, Beck (1995: 161–168) even proposed that some of the fragments belonged to a stand similar to the one from Ashdod. The fact that the site yielded fragments of musical instruments (e.g., a lyre with the hand of the player) and the figurine of a male flutist, strengthens this conjecture. However, only small fragments have been found, and the distribution area of the Phoenician figurines is rather distant, which leaves considerable room for doubt. I have therefore preferred to assign them to the category of the hybrid types.

3.3.2. Dating

Here, too, we have the problem of fragmentary, missing, or unreliable data concerning the dating of many figurines. C.11, C.12, and C.13 are assigned very generally to Iron Age II. One figurine (C.18) is perhaps 10th century

BCE in date. C.17 is apparently from the 9th century BCE. C.10 and the fragments from Qitmit (C.3–8) are from the 7th–6th centuries BCE.

3.3.3. Spatial Distribution (fig. 3.1)

Most of the figurines of this type were found at sites in Transjordan: C.10, C.11–12, C.13, C.14, C.15–16, C.17, and C.18. The south of Eretz-Israel yielded C.1 from Tell Jemmeh and C.3–8 from Qitmit (in the eastern Negev). Two figurines come from the north of the country: C.2 from Megiddo and C.9 from Samaria. The distribution of the figurines is shown on the map on fig. 3.1.

The relative abundance of figurines from Transjordan apparently results from the influential ties of this region with Phoenicia in Iron Age II¹⁴. This is attested by the close resemblance between some of these figurines and those of Type B, and by traits such as those of the figurine from ‘Ain Jenin (C.13) bearing an oil-lamp on its head, which are obviously of Phoenician origin (Gubel 1991: 134). Nevertheless, it seems that the figurines of this group were made locally from materials available to their craftsmen, who employed elements familiar to them from the plaque figurines, which were very common in both Israel and Transjordan.

3.3.4. The Archaeological Context

Two complete figurines were found in the same tomb at Nebo (C.11 and C.12). But there is no information concerning their exact location within the tomb, and thus it is impossible to ascertain the nature of their relationship with the deceased. Nor can we know whether they were deposited simultaneously or at different times.

Schumacher’s excavations at Megiddo produced a nearly complete figurine (C.2) from a so-called “palace”, which was probably a public building. Another nearly complete figurine is C.13 from ‘Ain Jenin, but its stratigraphic context is unknown.

Among the fragmentary figurines, only C.15–16, remnants of clay disks held by hands, were recovered from tombs. It seems that these represent the remains of two different figurines from the same tomb. The fragments C.3–8 from Qitmit can all be ascribed to a cultic context, owing to the nature of the site, even though three of the artefacts were collected from the surface.

The exact provenance of C.9 is unknown. However, it was found in what the excavators called the “royal quarter” on the acropolis at Samaria, so one can assume that the context was public in some way. The remaining fragments were either collected from the surface or their provenance is unknown.

These figurines were thus found in sepulchral, public, and cultic contexts. The fact that we cannot associate them with domestic contexts possibly results from the paucity of the examples at our disposal, or from the very

14 See Homes-Fredericq 1987: 89–96.

partial information we have concerning the circumstances and location in which many were discovered. Since most lack an archaeological context, we cannot conclude with any degree of certainty that figurines of this type are atypical of domestic contexts.

3.4. The Stand of the Musicians from Ashdod

3.4.1. Description of the Artefact (fig. 2.6)

A pottery cultic stand comprising a deep carinated bowl resting on a high cylindrical body. Height of stand, 34.7 cm; diameter at base, 14.2 cm; diameter at rim, 16.2 cm. The stand, of well-baked clay, reveals traces of white slip. The bowl is decorated with a pattern in red and black paint over the slip (M. Dothan 1970b: 311; T. Dothan 1982: 249). The stand is nearly complete, but at the time of its finding it was broken into two pieces (Ben-Shlomo 2005b: 180).

This stand is important in that it affords a broader iconographic context for the drum-playing figurines. In the body of the stand, above the base, there are three arch-shaped openings. These are surmounted by five figures encircling the middle of the body. Four of these are three-dimensional, and are set in rectangular windows (see details nos. 2–5, fig. 2.6). Their bottom portion serves to fix them in place, while their upper portion is quite realistic, albeit schematic. The heads are large in relation to the bodies, and both the eyes and nose are large and prominent. They hold different musical instruments: a double-reeded flute, a lyre, and a small hand drum. The drum is held in a position familiar from the various figurines, whereby the left hand supports it from below, while the right hand plays upon it (see detailed figure no. 5, fig. 2.6). The fourth figure is apparently holding cymbals. The fifth figure is larger and modelled differently, both in terms of style and technique (see detailed figure no. 1, fig. 2.6). Part of the body was fashioned by incising into the vessel, producing a cut-out, while the other part was applied. This figure has legs. Its face is grotesque and the head is flat, but similar in style to the other figures. The eyes and jutting ears are asymmetrical. It plays a double-reeded flute, broken at the end.

Above the musicians, a parade of animals is depicted in a technique combining incision and relief. It is difficult to identify them, but they bear a certain resemblance to the animal figures on the kernos from Ashdod (M. Dothan 1970b: 311; Ben-Shlomo 2005b: 181).

3.4.2. Dating

The stand was found at Ashdod in Stratum X, which the excavator originally dated to the end of the 11th or beginning of the 10th century BCE (M. Dothan 1970b: 310; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 123). In this stratum a new city was

erected on the tell; it was different in its layout and in the character of its remains from the Philistine city of Strata XIII–XI (M. Dothan 1970b: 311).

According to Finkelstein's low chronology, Stratum X should be assigned, at the earliest, to the end of the 10th century BCE, while its main period of activity occurred during the course of the 9th century BCE (Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz 2001: 236, 239–242). In the recent report of the Ashdod excavation, the expedition presented a similar position, dating Stratum X to the Iron Age IIA, 10th–9th centuries BCE (Ben-Shlomo 2005a: 5, 9, table 1.1). If so, the Stand of the Musicians may belong to 9th century BCE. This dating is important, as I shall demonstrate, when considering its archaeological parallels, most of which are 9th–8th century BCE, and the biblical testimony. In addition, we will see that this dating has implications for the cultural context and origins of the particular ensemble of musicians appearing on the stand.

3.4.3. The Archaeological Context

The stand was discovered in the 1969 excavation season on the acropolis of Tel Ashdod in Area H/K. Its locus (L. 5356) was a surface located in a complex of walls, floors, and installations (*tabuns*), and the stand itself was found adjoining one of the walls (Mazar and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 38–41, plan 2.10, fig. 2.40). In its vicinity there was an unusual clay model shrine and some restorable pottery (*ibid.*: 41). The Musicians' Stand, together with the other finds, attest to this precinct's cultic character; though the context of the stand is not completely clear, it could have served in an open space ritual, possibly related to a grave found nearby (M. Dothan 1970b: 311; Mazar and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 42).

3.4.4. The Ensemble and the Musical Instruments Depicted on the Stand

As stated, five figures appear on the stand, one being larger and different in its modelling from the others. Four of the figures, including the large one, can be identified with assurance as musicians. Two play a double-reeded flute, one a lyre, and another a small hand drum. The fifth (fig 2.6: detailed figure no.2) is more difficult to identify. Some scholars claim that it is holding cymbals (Braun 1994: no. 5), others (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 123) that a female singer is concerned. In Ruth Hestrin's view (1987: 67, n. 11), the fifth figure represents the goddess in whose honour the musicians are playing in a cultic ritual.

The sex of the figures is difficult to establish. However, owing to the rather coarse facial features and lack of distinctly female features, it seems to me preferable to assume that they are male.



Figure 3.5. Examples of the “Canaanite Orchestra” ensemble depicted on artefacts from the ancient Near East: 1. Ivory pyxis from Nimrud (after Beck 1995: fig. 3.111: e); 2. Bronze bowl from Idalion (detail after Bayer 1982: 31); 3. Bronze bowl from Olympia (after Beck 1995: fig. 3.111: d).

3.4.5 Parallels to the Ensemble of the Musicians from the Ancient Near East

The Stand of the Musicians from Ashdod is the only artefact from Eretz-Israel depicting an ensemble of players with instruments of different classes¹⁵. However, such an ensemble appears on archaeological finds from elsewhere in the ancient Near East. And on all of them the ensemble is similar to that from Ashdod.

Nimrod has yielded an ivory pyxis from the 8th century BCE with a relief depicting a Syrian or Phoenician ensemble (fig. 3.5: 1). It includes two double-reed flutes, a frame drum, and two string instruments (Rimmer 1969: pl. VIIa; Beck 1995: fig. 3.111: e). In the absence of obvious female traits, it is possible to consider the musicians as male.

¹⁵ A stand recently discovered at Yavneh, may also represent an ensemble several musicians with different instruments. The musicians’ figures were only partially preserved, and there is no clear evidence for the presence of a frame drum. This stand will be mentioned and discussed in Chapter 6.3.

Idalion, in Cyprus, has produced a bronze bowl dating to the 8th–9th century BCE (fig. 3.5: 2). Its interior is engraved with the scene of a seated goddess, before whom are three female musicians playing a drum, a double-reeded flute, and a lyre. There are also seven other women holding hands; they are apparently dancers and singers (Bayer 1982: 31).

An ensemble consisting of a double-reeded flute, a drum, and a lyre also appears on a bronze bowl from Olympia (fig. 3.5: 3) from the 8th century BCE (Moscatti 1968: 102–103; Beck 1995: 163).

A stone relief from Karatepe from the 8th century BCE shows four men playing a drum, a double-reeded flute, and two different kinds of lyres (Pritchard 1969: 375, pl. 797).

Chapter 4

Identifying the Figures and Round Object in the Figurines

4.1. The Plaque Figurines (Type A)

4.1.1. Identifying the Round Object as a Drum

In his comprehensive study, Pritchard (1943) classified the plaque figurines with a round object as a type in itself, but did not consider the meaning of the object. Others suggested that it was a round cake or a loaf of bread (Lapp: 1964: 40; Glueck 1940: 150–151), a plate, or an offering-bowl (Lapp 1964: 67–69¹⁶; Bartlett 1968: 238¹⁷; Amr 1980: 111–113; Meyers 1987: 118). Amiran (1967: 99–100) believed it was the disk of the sun; she further argued that it was not an object serving in the cult, but the object of worship itself, i.e., the sun. Her interpretation follows from iconographic considerations based upon a comparison between a figurine with a round object from Gezer and an ivory plaque from Nimrod on which a winged sun-disk appears.

A number of scholars, by contrast, have proposed identifying the round object as a small frame drum (Hillers 1970: 606–619; Meyers 1987: 118). In some figurines there is a simple circle around the rim, representing the frame of the drum (fig. 4.1: 1). Beck (1990: 88), who subscribes to this view, claims that the decoration around the rim indicates the manner in which the membrane was fastened to the frame. For example, the pearl patterns or dots around the rim in several figurines, signify the insertion of round nails (fig. 4.1: 2). Chambon (1984: 71) also believes that the object is a drum, and proposes that the triangles on the object in the figurine from Tell el-Far‘ah North (fig. 4.1: 3) are thongs used in stretching the leather membrane over the frame. Such patterns appear on the drum in several other figurines as well. Keel and Uehlinger (1998: 164–167), as well as Amr (1980: 118–119) and Poethig (1985: 48), accept the identification of the object as a drum.

16 Lapp is not categorical about this, and admits that in some of the figurines it is possible to identify the round object as a drum or even the disk of the sun.

17 This interpretation relates to the figurines from Mesopotamia, but I have already noted the close resemblance between them and those from Eretz-Israel; and even the scholarly disputes concerning the round object, the figures, and the meaning of the figurines are similar.

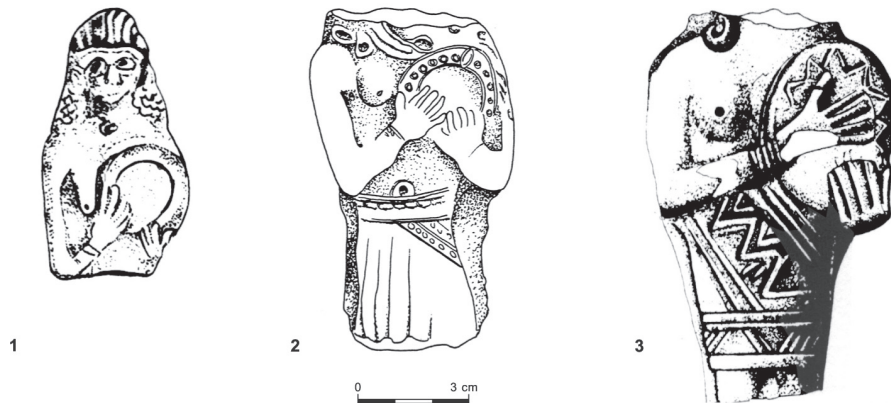


Figure 4.1. Depiction of frame drums and their characteristics in Type A figurines: 1. Simple circle representing the frame (Hazor, A.9; Beck 1999: fig. 7.7: 10); 2. Pearl pattern representing nails for attaching the membrane (Jatt, A.11; Horowitz 2001: fig. 1) 3. Zigzag pattern representing thongs for stretching the membrane (Tell el-Far'ah (N), A.45; Chambon 1984: pl.63: 2).

Those who oppose this identification claim that the manner in which the round object is held is inappropriate to drumming (Bayer 1963: 36; Amiran 1967: 99¹⁸; Meyers 1991: 19). However, I accept the opinion that the object is pressed against the body owing to technical exigencies involved in the production of mould figurines (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 166; Tadmor 2006: 326–327). In most instances, it is supported at the bottom by the left hand, while the entire right hand lies over it; this can be construed as a stylised representation of beating upon it. Furthermore, this manner of holding the round object resembles that of the Type B figurines in my study, and for these, as I will show (4.2.1), there is a general consensus that the object is, in fact, a drum.

Further support for this conclusion comes from a figurine from Beth Shean; it represents a figure playing a double-reeded flute¹⁹ (James 1966: fig. 115: 2; see fig. 4.2: 1), and its characteristics are very similar to those of

18 Amiran calls the instrument “cymbals”, writing “tambourine” within parentheses. This term is erroneous, and one should be careful to distinguish between cymbals and a frame drum. They belong to different classes of instruments and are played differently.

19 The figurine is mould-made, and prominent clay margins exist to either side. The lower portion, from the thighs down, is missing. The figure plays a double-reeded flute by blowing on its mouthpiece. The flute is held against the middle of the body, each of the hands holding one of the reeds. The headdress, with its decorated fringes across the brow and to the sides, is very similar to those of the women drummers in the plaque figurines. The figure wears a kind of belt or lower article of clothing. The sexual features are not accentuated, and it remains unclear whether a male or female is intended. The figurine was found in Locus 25, in a chamber in the area of the northern storerooms in the west of Block A. It apparently derives from Upper Stratum V, dated to the 9th–8th centuries BCE.



Figure 4.2. Figurines of double-reeded flute players: 1. Plaque figurine from Beth Shean (James 1966: fig. 115: 2); 2. Figurine from Qitmit (Beck 1995: fig. 3.77); 3. Phoenician type figurine from Achzib (IAA).

the figurines under discussion. Although it comprises just a single artefact, the indubitable occurrence of a flute reinforces the identification of the round object as a musical instrument.

4.1.2. The Identification of the Figures

The various interpretations offered by scholars for the figures depicted in the plaque figurines of the type under discussion all ascribe them to cultic contexts – as goddesses, priestesses, or worshippers in a religious rite (Meyers 1991: 19).

Most of these scholars relate them specifically to the fertility cult,²⁰ and esteem them divinities. Pritchard (1943: 59–87) claims that, while representing ancient Near Eastern goddesses, their particular identities cannot be

²⁰ For the connexion between the figurines and the fertility cult, see Ch. 8, and for the connexion between drumming and this cult, see Ch. 6 and 7.

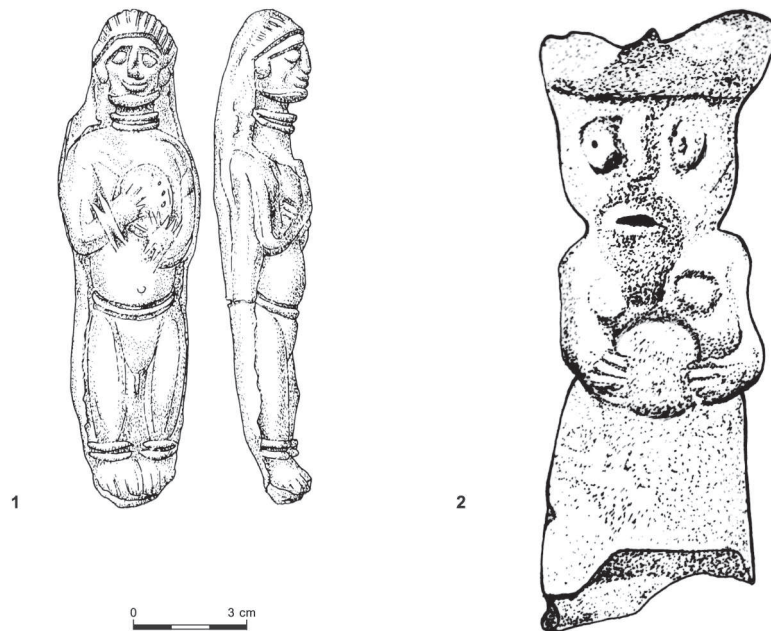


Figure 4.3. Drummers figurines depicting mixed sexual characteristics: 1. A.42, Tel 'Ira (Beck 1999: fig. 7.5); 2. C.13, 'Ain Jenin (ibid.: fig. 7.7: 11).

established. Hillers (1970) also identifies the figure as a goddess²¹. According to Amiran (1967: 99–100), who associates the round object with the solar disk, the figure represents the sun goddess, as known from various pantheons in this region. She even relates her to a reference in the Book of Jeremiah to the “Queen of Heaven”; it was customary for women to “make cakes in her image”. Amr (1980: 118–124) sees in these figurines the goddess Ashtoreth, and links her with the fertility cult. In Dever’s view (1994: 121–122), they represent Asherah.

Beck (1990: 91–92) also believes the plaque figurines to be divinities, especially those which possess bisexual characteristics (A.42 from Tel 'Ira and C.13 from 'Ain Jenin; see fig. 4.3: 1, 2). In her opinion, they represent hermaphrodite gods, but she admits that it is difficult to establish their divinity, and, considering their lack of iconographic uniformity, it is quite possible that the same figure is not represented by all the figurines. According to Beck, there is some evidence for hermaphrodite deities in the ancient Near East, perhaps including Ashtar-Chemosh, mentioned on the Mesha Stone (ibid.)²². In the Mesopotamian realm, for instance, the same divine

21 This identification is expressed in the title of his essay, “The Goddess with the Tambourine”.

22 None of the scholars who have discussed the identity of Ashtar-Chemosh has raised the

figure sometimes exhibits a combination of masculine and feminine features (Goodnick-Westenholz 1998: 65).

Various examples from the region can serve to reinforce the identification of the figures depicted by these figurines as goddesses. Keel and Uehlinger (1998: 166) cite a number of figures which they consider a goddess with a drum. For example, a cylinder seal from the 15th century BCE found at Alalakh shows a goddess with a drum together with other goddesses, a female lyre-player, and a female dancer. Another cylinder seal, from the Neo-Assyrian period (9th–8th centuries BCE), depicts a goddess, identified as Ishtar; she plays a drum in honour of the Storm God, just now returning from his battle against the sea monster (*ibid.*). They also cite a Punic example of a goddess with a drum in a pose resembling that of the figurines (*ibid.*). Beck (1990: 89) mentions a seal from Mari which shows a figure she identifies as the goddess Ana-Sin-Taklaku; she is naked, and a drum is attached to her arm. The figures depicted by Mesopotamian figurines from the Early Babylonian period have also been identified by several scholars as goddesses, although opinions differ.

Another argument for the identification of the figures under discussion as goddesses is provided by their spatial distribution in the various sites and contexts. An examination reveals that, generally speaking, two such figurines are not found together. This is logical if one believes that they all represent a single divinity. However, the argument becomes problematic when one considers the differences in detail among the figurines; it is not possible to establish that the same figure is portrayed by all.

The archaeological context of some of the figurines links them to a cult: e.g., the mould from Taanach (A.35), which was found in the temple's refuse heap. Furthermore, the treatment that certain figurines merited after being retired from use, such as the burial of A.1 from Aphek, attests to the substantial importance attributed to them.

Nevertheless, there are also many arguments in favour of considering these figures human. Keel and Uehlinger (1998: 166–167) reject their identification as goddesses. They believe that they represent women participating in a cult, and that the drum had a purpose in these rites only when it was handled by a woman.²³ There are likewise scholars who deem the figurine representations from Mesopotamia as priestesses in a fertility cult, not deities.

The identification of these figures as priestesses or participants in a rite is buttressed by the fact that the temple model from the Kerak region features two identical female drummers, one to either side of the entrance. Their very interchangeability makes it difficult to consider them divine. For why

possibility of bisexuality (Beck 1990: 91). In a personal conversation I had with Prof. N. Na'aman, he stated his view that Ashtar-Chemosh is male, but that there are other deities which can be considered bisexual.

23 This raises the question, however, as to why they identify depictions of women drummers in other artistic media cited here as goddesses with a drum.

should the model offer two indistinguishable representations of a goddess? Furthermore, if the object of worship was the figurine itself, one would expect it to be inside the temple or in the middle of the opening, as exemplified by a Punic stone stele from the 6th century BCE. It features a figure identified as the goddess Tanit; she bears a round object, identified as a drum, in her hand, and she stands in the middle of the opening of the architectural façade, that is, of the temple gateway (Stager 1984: 46–47).

As to the figures bearing mixed sexual characteristics, I would like to suggest they represent men or women with traits belonging to the opposite sex. Such persons, whose sexual and gender identity is neither exclusively masculine nor feminine, have existed throughout history. For various genetic reasons, their primary and secondary sexual traits are mixed: e.g., enlarged breasts are combined with smaller male genitals, or their female sexual organs have been deformed and, at first glance, look like male organs (Bushong 1995). This description suits the figurine from Tel 'Ira.

In his study of gender variance in contemporary South Asia, Penrose refers to a “third gender” consists of hermaphrodites, women who do not menstruate, as well as passively homosexual and castrated men (Penrose 2001: 4).

Numerous cultures have accorded such persons exceptional status. Many traditional non-Western societies have utilized the unique talents of alternative gender individuals to serve society as a whole (Roscoe 1998: 212). Nanda (2000) argues that gender-variant roles have been institutionalized in India and in pre-colonial North American societies (Penrose 2001: 5–6). The Indians of North America, for instance, believed that they evinced the intervention of supernatural forces. Such a being conferred benefits on his society by dint of being liberated from the normal limits. In numerous tribal conflicts between the natives of North America, as well as in areas of South America, they conferred advantages on their camp. Often they served as mediators between the world of men and the world of the spirits. And, owing to their visions, they were deemed prophets (Jordan 1999).

The *hijras*, third gender individuals in South Asia, serve as priests of the mother goddess, and are believed to be empowered by her to predict the future, make curses come true (Penrose 2001: 11). Similar phenomenon is described regarding the *galli* transgendered priests in the ancient Mediterranean, who were hermaphrodites or castrated males dressed in feminine or androgynous clothing (Roscoe 1996).

The link between alternative genders and administrative and religious specialization is attested in early Mesopotamian societies (Murray and Roscoe 1997: 66–67; Penrose 2001: 11).

Burgh has recently rejected the identification of the Tel 'Ira figurine as bisexual, and claimed it should be considered fully male, since the breast is not clearly indicated (Burgh 2004: 129). Burgh presents evidence from Mesopotamia for eunuchs and cross-dressers who had distinctive status and engaged mostly in cultic activities and the arts, and claims that the earlier

Mesopotamian drummer figurines, which were identified as women, could be male cross-dressers. He concludes the same is possible for figurines from Eretz-Israel, especially the Tel 'Ira figurine (*ibid.*: 129–130).

I believe the bisexual figurines from Tel 'Ira and 'Ain Jenin exhibit features which can certainly be ascribed to a woman, who, for various genetic and hormonal reasons, also had male characteristics. The sexual identity of such persons is by no means unambiguous, and has implications for their gender identity as well. They can be esteemed alternative gender, not necessarily masculine or feminine. But they can also adopt, as it were, a feminine identity by dint, for example, of their dominant female traits and their female sexual penchants. If so, it is possible that they were integrated into a cult whose functions were defined as mainly feminine. It is certainly conceivable that they were accredited with special powers which conferred upon them a role in different rites, and it seems to me that, by virtue of possessing both male and female genitals and other attributes, it was believed that they exercised superior influence in the domain of procreation.

Further evidence in support of interpreting the drummers as mortal is the plaque figurine from Beth-Shean; it depicts a figure playing a double-reeded flute (see fig. 4.2: 1), and its characteristics are similar to those of the drummers (see 4.1.1). But it has never been suggested that it represents a divinity, and thus it attests to music-making within the context of a cult, but is not the image of the actual god.

Nor do the archaeological contexts warrant an explicit identification of the figures with a deity. Some, to be sure, have cultic connexions: e.g., the women on the temple model from Kerak, the mould from Taanach, etc. Nevertheless, these contexts by no mean oblige us to identify the figures as gods; we can just as readily consider them priestesses or participants in a rite. Other figurines were recovered from secondary contexts, some broken or otherwise impaired. Had they represented deities, they would have been treated with greater circumspection, one suspects.

In the ancient Near East, the drum is sometimes seen in the hands of a goddess linked to women and procreation, but also in the hands of mortal women active in a cult to various divinities. Examples of drumming in cultic contexts from Egypt and Mesopotamia will be presented in Ch. 6.

Although many of the arguments for identifying the figures as goddesses are credible, I prefer to consider them participants in a cultic rite. It can certainly be the cult of a goddess connected with fertility. In the following, I will discuss drumming in this context, and the role of the figurines which portray it.



Figure 4.4. Frame drum (*bendir*) player in the Imilchil festival (Aït Ibrahim tribe, high Atlas, Morocco). The drumming position is the same as depicted in the figurines. (Photo by B. Afik).

4.2. Figurines of the Phoenician Type (Type B)

4.2.1. The Identification of the Round Object as a Drum

The identification of the round object as a drum is mainly based on the manner in which it is held. It is a posture typical of drumming, whereby one hand supports the instrument from the bottom, while the other beats upon it. Musicians throughout the East play the drum thus even today (Braun 1994: no. 7; 2002: 125), as illustrated by fig. 4.4.

At times the rim of the instrument is stressed by means of painting or relief: e.g., B.6 from Achzib (fig. 2.4: 4), and B.11 from Shiqmona (fig. 2.4:

5). In this way, it appears, the craftsmen denoted the frame of the drum over which the membrane was stretched.

Furthermore, a number of figurines, comparable in their modelling and mode of manufacture to those under discussion, hold musical instruments, such as the double-reeded flute, which are readily recognisable. This makes it easier to identify the women as musicians (Meyers 1991: 18). Similar figurines, such as those of the flute-players, have been found in the cemeteries at Achzib (Braun 1994: no. 6; E. Mazar 1996: 100–101, Pl. 53: 10, 11; Dayagi-Mendels 2002: 149, fig. 7.7), and dated to the 9th–6th centuries BCE (see fig. 4.2: 3). Their short hair suggests that a male is involved²⁴, but the other features, especially the hollow, conical, wheel-made body and the simplicity of modelling, attest to its close affinity with the woman drummer.

The identification of the round object as a drum is confirmed by the Stand of the Musicians from Ashdod. It also has a figure holding such an object in a comparable manner (see fig. 2.6, detailed figure no.5), together with others identified with certainty as players of different instruments, e.g., a lyre and a double-reeded flute. Scenes of ensembles from Mesopotamia and Cyprus also include a figure with a drum; it is held exactly like the round object in the present figurines. This is also true of the depictions of drummers from Egypt.

4.2.2. The Identification of the Figures

Various proposals have been offered for identifying the women drummers of the Type B figurines, including goddesses, priestesses of a fertility cult, and ordinary women participating in this cult or in another, non-religious event (Meyers 1991: 18; Braun 1994: no. 7). In Meyers' view (1991: 19), the plain attire, the absence of headdress and jewellery,²⁵ and the simple coiffure, indicate that mortal women are involved. The paucity of jewellery and the lack of other appurtenances, apart from the drum, support her surmise that these women belong to a simple social class. If they were the daughters of royalty, the governing elite, or the priesthood, one would expect them to be provided with various status symbols.

On the basis of the evidence presented here, one can conclude that the figurines of this type represent simple women playing drums.

24 Most scholars consider the figures in the flute-playing figurines of this type to be female (for example, E. Mazar 1996: 100–102), but Holland has called attention to different traits, and identified the flute-playing figurine as a male (Holland 1975: 145, pl. 43: 6).

25 Meyers believes that the circles sometimes drawn around the neck represent a collar or the neckline of a dress, rather than a necklace.

4.3. Hybrid Figurines (Type C)

4.3.1. The Identification of the Round Object as a Drum

The identification of the round object appearing in the figurines I have allotted to this type is based upon its identification in the two previous types. As I have shown, some of the figurines of this type depict a figure holding the round object in a manner similar to that of Type B, that is to say, perpendicular to the body, whereby one hand supports it from the bottom, while the other extends across its face and apparently beats on it.

In other figurines, the figure holds the object in a manner similar to that of Type A, that is to say, horizontally against the body in the region of the chest. In most, the posture resembles that of playing a drum, as described for the other figurines. Only a few exhibit a different posture, whereby the object is held by both hands in the middle of the chest. However, the resemblance between them and the other figurines warrants a similar interpretation, and their incorporation into the drummer group.

Here, too, it is possible to identify figurines of musicians playing a double-reeded flute (see fig. 4.2: 2); they were found at sites, such as Qitmit, which also yielded figurines or fragments of the drummer group, and which were modelled differently than the above types.

4.3.2. The Identification of the Figures

As with the drum, my interpretation of the figures derives from that of the two main types I have already reviewed. It seems that they represent women, some in simple attire, without jewellery or special accessories, while others display additional features, such as jewellery. Here one can also cite the figurine from 'Ain Jenin bearing an oil-lamp on its head, and which exhibits bisexual traits; it was considered together with the plaque figurine from Tel 'Ira in 4.1.2.

Chapter 5

Drumming in the Old Testament

The Old Testament is the sole literary source at our disposal providing information about drumming in Eretz-Israel. Since it is not homogeneous, and different sections were composed at different times, one should relate to its testimony with prudence and in the spirit of biblical criticism. The text does not necessarily reflect the reality of the period to which it refers. Nevertheless, sections belonging to the Deuteronomistic redaction (7th–6th centuries BCE) were often written down shortly after the events they describe, and other parts are based upon pre-Deuteronomistic sources (Hoffman 1997: 68–74; Na’aman 2002: 44–59, 73, 77). As such, these sections can contribute to understanding and interpreting the archaeological finds.

The Old Testament contains a rich lexicon of musical terms, and dozens of instruments are cited. These can be classified according to the four groups listed in 1.8. They include at least nine types of chordophones, some twelve aerophones, five ideophones, but only one membranophone – the drum (Meyers 1991: 21). It is customary to identify it with the small hand frame drum depicted in various artefacts, which also agrees with the instrument’s use, as can be inferred from diverse passages (Mitchell 1992: 130–134).

The drum is mentioned 16 times in the Old Testament and, according to Poethig (1985: 19–30), the relevant texts can be divided into two main categories, as follows:

A. Texts in which the Drum Appears Together with Other Musical Instruments

Eleven passages mention the drum in connexion with other instruments – from one to six or seven. At times this ensemble is linked to prophecy or other religious themes. The sex of the musicians is not specified in any of these passages, but in certain cases the context implies that they were male. The composition of these ensembles resembles that of the musicians appearing in archaeological artefacts (such as the stand from Ashdod), and it is often called the “Canaanite Orchestra”. I shall discuss this at greater length below.

In quoting from the Old Testament, I have availed myself of the King James Version, which is well-known to English-speaking readers. However, many of the terms it employs for musical instruments are no longer accepted by scholars in the field, and, if left intact, their inclusion can lead to misunderstandings. I have attempted to circumvent this problem by inserting the modern terms for the instruments in brackets after the traditional translation.

The Book of Samuel offers an example of a drum as part of an ensemble in connexion with prophesy (I Sam. 10: 5–6): “After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines; and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery [*harp*], and a timbrel [*drum*], and a pipe [*flute*], and a harp [*lyre*], before them; and they will be prophesying. And the spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.”

For an example of drumming together with the playing of other instruments in a religious setting, one can cite the story about the relocation of the Tabernacle to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6: 5): “And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord with all manner of instruments made of cypress-wood, and with harps [*lyres*], and with psalteries [*harps*], and with timbrels [*drums*], and with sistra, and with cymbals.” This episode is also described in I Chr. 13: 8, in which a similar ensemble appears.

Since considerable portions of the narrative cycle of Samuel, Saul, and David evidently belonged to early sources at the disposal of the Deuteronomistic editor (Na’aman 2002: 106), one can assume that the musical tradition of an ensemble including a drum was known in Israel before the 7th century BCE.

Another clear link between musical ensembles and the cult is attested by Psalm 150, which states that the Lord should be praised by the playing of various instruments (including the drum) and by dance.

The passages cited here, describing ensembles, indicate that a musical tradition enjoying official status played a role in Yahweh’s cult.

B. Passages Describing the Playing of Drums by Women

Five biblical passages refer to the playing of drums by women alone, together with singing and dancing. Their context differs from that of the ensembles, and includes celebrations of military victories by the Israelites and their God. The most prominent examples are the Song of Miriam, and the stories concerning Jephthah’s daughter and the reception of Saul and David by the women of Israel:

Ex. 15: 20–21: “And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel [*drum*] in her hand, and all the women went out after her with

timbrels [*drums*] and with dances. And Miriam sang onto them: Sing ye to the Lord...”

Judges 11: 34: “And Jephthah came to Mizpah unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels [*drums*] and with dances...”

I Sam. 18: 6: “And it came to pass as they came, when David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with timbrels [*drums*], with joy, and with three-stringed instruments.”

In Psalms 68: 26, the following passage occurs in a description of a paean to the Lord: “The singers go before, the minstrels follow after, in the midst of damsels playing upon timbrels [*drums*].”

A link between the drum and women is also implied in Jeremiah 31: 3 (in which the drum is called a tabret): “Again will I build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel; again shalt thou be adorned with thy tabrets [*drums*], and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry.”

The dating of the various passages in which drumming is mentioned is controversial and sometimes impossible. Nevertheless, although some of the passages were certainly composed and edited after the Iron Age, others were already written down by the 7th century BCE, and thus reflect the reality of the period from which most of the artefacts under discussion here derive.

The story of Jephthah’s daughter can serve as an example. According to Amit (1999: 14–15), the editing of the Book of Judges (in which it occurs) was already complete at a pre-Deuteronomistic phase, i.e., before the 7th century BCE; in fact, the text was mostly edited in Judah at the end of the 8th century BCE. Although its character is northern, it reflects the mood obtaining in Judah after the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel (ibid.: 15). Soggin (1987: 218), who relates specifically to the story of Jephthah and his daughter and its element of sacrifice, contends that it reflects the Israelite religion (in a peripheral region) as it was before the teachings of the great prophets and Josiah’s reform. That is to say, he claims that the story is, at the latest, from the 7th century BCE.

As to the Song of Miriam, many scholars insist upon its antiquity (Noth 1962: 121–123; Childs 1974: 245–247; Propp 1999: 485, 548), but others dispute this claim (Loewenstamm 1987: 102, n. 3 and additional references).

The Book of Jeremiah and the stories about Saul and David belong, as stated, to the Deuteronomistic redaction, and thus describe the circumstances of the Iron Age.

Jeremiah was composed on the eve of the Judah’s destruction, but it also relates to the contemporary situation in the Northern Kingdom. The prophesy in Ch. 31 was written during the final years of Josiah’s reign, as the inhabitants of Samaria were being sent into exile (Hoffman 2001: 570); it concerns the Kingdom of Israel, expressing the hope that the deportees will return (Bright 1965: 272–273; Jones 1992: 384; Hoffman 2001: 570–571, 587).

Psalms 68 is based on fragments of a pre-Deuteronomistic poem, although it also has sections whose style is later (Kraus 1989: 49–51). It appears that here, too, the tradition is that of the Northern Kingdom, not that of Judah (ibid.: 50).

To summarize: The Old Testament affirms the tradition of women drummers in a variety of genres (narrative, prophesy, and psalm). Many of these passages can be ascribed to different phases of the Iron Age, beginning with the story of Jephthah, relatively early in Iron Age II, and concluding with the prophecies of Jeremiah, which date to the end of the period. In addition, most of the passages describe the reality and traditions of the Kingdom of Israel.

Chapter 6

Drumming in Eretz-Israel in the Iron Age – Who Were the Musicians and What Were the Contexts of Their Performance?

6.1. Music, Society, and Gender

The archaeological finds, together with the biblical account, reveal a consistent connexion between women and the drum. Drumming was their domain, and men practised it only in the context of an ensemble consisting of several different instruments. In order to assess the significance of the musical tradition of woman drummers and that of ensemble-playing within the framework of Israelite society, it will be necessary to examine the social role of music-making in general.

Various scholars have discussed how music is influenced by social processes and influences them in return. According to Ballantine (1984: 5, 12), the world of music is a microcosm that reflects the macrocosm of society; music not only derives from society; it reciprocates by acting upon it. Seeger (1987) claims that music not only transpires with a social setting, but enables us to understand a society within the context of a musical performance. In his opinion, the performance reflects fundamental elements of social organisation and ideology. Lévi-Strauss (1970: 23) adds that the essence of a society's mythic thinking can be discerned in its music.

Music has social significance, because, among its functions, it affords the means for people to recognise identities, places, and the boundaries between them (Stokes 1997: 5). In the spirit of Barth's study (1969), Stokes (1997: 6) suggests that music serves the members of a specific social group by creating boundaries which distinguish it from others, thereby preserving and justifying it. These boundaries can also exist within a given populace – gender groups, for instance.

The musical instruments and the manner in which they are played reflect, *inter alia*, gender (Stokes 1997: 22). Studies undertaken in various societies have shown that the separation between the male and female worlds has led to the development of distinct and independent musical genres, in which the women's activity complements men's (Sarkissian 1992: 340–341). Music is a medium of communication between the sexes, and musical events provide a setting for this communication, and thus for the development or revision of

intergender relationships (ibid.: 339). Thus, although music serves to define and preserve the social boundaries between the sexes, it also facilitates their crossing: e.g., when women appear in a public arena normally identified with men, as opposed to the domestic arena (ibid.: 340–341).

It thus appears that, alongside reflecting and creating values which sustain a given society's way of life, music can also reject these values and offer new ones in their stead (Ballantine 1984: 11). Musical traditions and genres can comprise a framework for the expression of ideological norms for a society or groups within it (e.g., between rulers and ruled or men and women), and a musical performance is liable to be an arena for tensions between them.

6.2. The Drum as a Feminine Instrument

6.2.1. Drumming as a Popular (Folk) Feminine Genre – The Victory Song of the Daughters of Israel

The Archaeological Evidence – The drummer figurines of the Phoenician Type represent women and *only* women throughout their range of distribution. This is also true of the Hybrid Types²⁶. It will be recalled that Cyprus produced another type, technically and stylistically similar to that of the women drummers. These figurines are less common, and it is customary to identify their drummers as male, in view of the absence of distinct female traits (Karageorghis 1995: 40)²⁷. Moreover, their hair is short, and some have beards. One should also observe that in some of these figurines the round object is held differently than in the drummer figurines, whereby both hands press against its sides (ibid.). This posture is unsuitable to drumming, and Meyers (1991: 19) has suggested that the object be identified as cymbals. Taking into account the drum-players (membraphones), the lyre-players (chordophones), the flute-players (aerophones), and the cymbal-players (idiophones), one has depictions of all the classes of musical instruments in currency during this period (ibid.). And this figurine classification offers a clear gender paradigm, whereby women play the hand drum and, indeed, dominate membraphone performances (ibid.)²⁸.

As I have already shown in 3.2.3, the figurine type of a woman drummer with a hollow, conical body occurs in abundance on Cyprus, where it appears to have assimilated into an earlier tradition of women drummers on the island, as attested by figurines from the Late Bronze Age.

²⁶ Except for C.13 from 'Ain Jenin, which is bisexual, and was treated in 4.1.2.

²⁷ Karageorghis (1995: 40) notes that a number of scholars have identified these figures as female without any justification, while others have divided them into two groups: those who play upon the instrument (male), and those who merely hold it against their chest, without playing upon it (female).

²⁸ As to the figurines with a double-reeded flute, which resemble the drummer figurines of Type B, I have already shown that their players should be considered male, which further emphasises the singularity of the women drummer figurines.

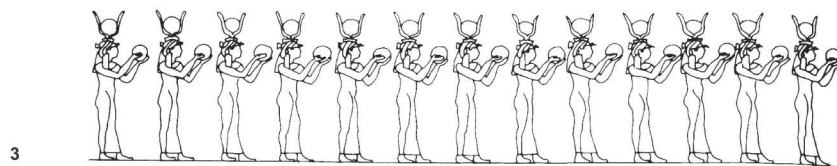
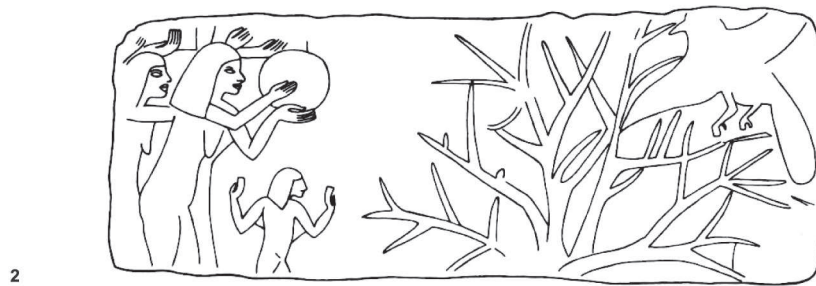
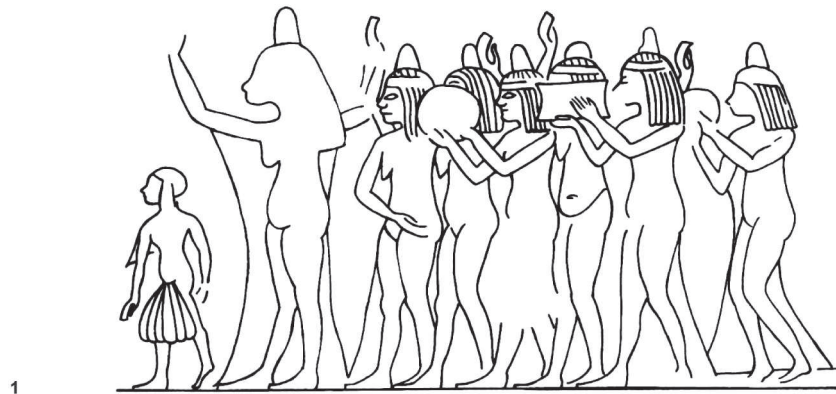


Figure 6.1. Depictions of women playing frame drums from Egypt: 1. Street band of women playing round and rectangular frame drums, el-Amarna (Manniche 1991: fig. 49); 2. Female drummers in a hunting scene, el-Amarna (ibid.: fig. 5) 3. Priestesses playing frame drums, Dendera (detail after Manniche 1991: fig. 38).

In contrast to the women drummers in the plaque figurines of Type A, who are totally or partially naked, with articles of finery and rich jewellery, the figurines of Type B and most of those of the similar Type C are plainly clothed, and I have accordingly identified them as women from a simple class, rather than priestesses (4.2.2).

In Egypt, women drummers appear in diverse scenes; some are cultic (6.2.2), others are popular (folk). The frame drum was brought to Egypt from Mesopotamia, where it originated (Manniche 1975: 5), but one encounters it in Egypt throughout the successive periods. Figure 6.1 shows examples of women playing a frame/hand drum: the wall of a tomb at el-Amarna (fig. 6.1: 1) depicts a group of female street musicians playing both types of frame drums (round and rectangular) current in Egypt; the relief of one of Akhenaton's buildings, also el-Amarna (fig. 6.1: 2), shows a woman with a drum, who, together with her companions, is scaring birds, perhaps as part of a hunting scene. There are also, as stated, various scenes showing female drummers in cultic settings. The pattern that emerges from this evidence is that, in Egypt as well, the round frame drum is a feminine instrument and only appears exceptionally in the hands of male deities (Manniche 1975: 5; Ziegler 1977: 210). The Egyptian illustrations depict a manner of holding the instrument while playing which is very similar to that of the figurines of the Phoenician type; this provides additional support for the identification of the latter as drummers. Furthermore, the Egyptian scenes showing groups of women drummers together are important for interpreting the finds from Israel, since they provide a context for the drumming which cannot be inferred from the individual figurines (but which is afforded by the biblical descriptions).

In sum, the archaeological finds appear to show that drumming is a musical genre reserved exclusively to women, who performed in diverse settings, not necessarily cultic. They also played drums within a group framework.

Another example of a group of women identified with a specific musical genre is that of mourners (Ginsberg 1938). They are mentioned in the Old Testament (Meyers 1993: 238, n. 48), and also appear in the archaeological record. The Philistine sites in Eretz-Israel have yielded vessels which served in the rituals of burial and mourning; their rims are decorated with small figures of women mourners, who beat upon their heads with their hands. This appears to have been a Mycenaean practice which reached our region in the course of Iron Age I (T. Dothan 1982: 237–249; A. Mazar 1986: 1–15; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 123). Evidence of mourning by groups of women has been found in pre-classical Greece (Iakovidis 1966; Ahlberg 1971; Finkenstaedt 1973; Cavanagh and Mee 1995; Immerwahr 1995), as well as in Egypt and Phoenicia (Cavanagh and Mee 1995: 56, fig. 13–15).

The Biblical Evidence – The Old Testament delineates a picture similar to that which emerges from the archaeological findings. It attests to the existence of a separate musical tradition, exclusively of women, who played drums, generally in accompaniment to song and dance. It was different from other

musical traditions, and apparently its context was also different. In general, it was linked to the victory celebrations of the Israelite warriors and of God over their foes – that is to say, it was a popular rather than cultic celebration, although at times it had religious significance. Poethig (1985) calls this the “victory song tradition” of the women of Israel.

Scholars have proposed linking other biblical texts to this genre, although drums are not specifically mentioned: e.g., the Song of Deborah (Judges 4), which associates a song, a woman, and victory (Meyers 1991: 22). Meyers argues that the rhythmic structure of the Hebrew song and the usual connexion between song, dance, and percussion instruments in the folk tradition allow us to attribute drumming to the Song of Deborah. This is because percussion instruments served to establish and maintain the beat (*ibid.*). In my view, a rhythmic song does not necessitate the accompaniment of rhythmic instruments. However, from the point of view of the poetic genre, there is certainly a link, in terms of both structure and content, between the Song of Deborah and, for instance, the Song of the Sea, as performed by Miriam and the women of Israel.

The Significance of Drumming in the Victory Song – Since drumming is a feminine tradition, the musical behaviour expressed therein should serve both to reflect and dictate gender behaviour in general. Drums and drumming as a framework for the Victory Song genre has significance for the determination and preservation of gender boundaries and, thereby, the social order. The women, going forth to welcome the warriors returning from battle, answered the latter’s expectations by providing an artistic “seal of approval” to their triumph. The men, watching the performance, acknowledged their feminine talents and the vital contribution of the women to consummating the complex chain of events associated with war and victory (Meyers 1991: 25).

However, beyond being a simple expression of the differences obtaining between men and women, while conferring legitimacy on the status quo, music can also serve to thrust back boundaries, and be an agent of social change (Poethig 1985: 116; Stokes 1997: 22).

Gender boundaries are expressed in the roles and types of activities associated with men and women, and in the social spheres in which they operate. The recognition that society functions on two levels – public and private – lies at the root of most discussion concerning masculine dominance (Meyers 1988: 32). These two levels can be correlated with the general division between the types of activities: the private or domestic sphere, which revolves around the household and the procreative processes focussed therein; and the public sphere, comprising everything outside the household – collective behaviour, and the organisation of the rules and laws pertaining to the systems and situations beyond the needs of the family units. In this scheme, feminine identity is bound to the household, masculine identity to the public sphere (*ibid.*). However, the opposition between public and domestic sometimes obscures the positive integration between them, especially in

societies where there does not yet exist a well-established state order. But it is significant in a society in which kinship and family are separate – a separation deemed desirable! – from political and economic issues (*ibid.*). This basic division of labour has implications for the status and role of women in general, and for their patterns of activity and participation in important social organisations (Bird 1987: 400).

The performance of women (normally confined to the domestic arena) in the public (i.e., masculine) arena, thus comprises a kind of transgression of boundaries (Sarkissian 1992: 341). Since music is an expressive form of language (Lévi-Strauss 1970: 18), a musical performance is a medium of rhetorical power (Abrahams 1986; Meyers 1991: 25; 1993: 66). The power of songs resides in its combination of two different modes of expression: the “pathogenic” and the “logogenic”. While the first is linked to emotion (*pathos*), and is expressed in drumming with bodily movements and dance, the second is intellectual and represents genres in which the word (*logos*) rules. Victory songs convey their message by means of both music and words (Poethig 1985: 115–116).

This communication obtains both between the members of the performing group and between them and the audience. A performance, especially within a popular (folk) framework, such as the kind under discussion, creates a bond between the spectators and the performers. This bond confers upon the latter a sense of control over their public (Meyers 1991: 25). It is by this means, as said, that the women assert their indispensability to the victory celebrations, and the men’s recognition of their importance enhances their status. As to the performers themselves, Meyers avers (*ibid.*) that their public appearance strengthens their sense of collective power. This sense was already established before their performance among the women specialising in music, even if this group was not formally defined. The assumption is that, in order to maintain their ability to perform, it was necessary for them to meet on occasion to compose and learn the songs, as well as for communal music-making.

It is not certain that all the women participating in the group drummed, danced, and sang. However, on the basis of research conducted on the composition and performance of traditional songs in various societies (e.g., Finnegan 1977), it appears that the women drummers depicted in the Old Testament were part of an association within which small groups of performers sang, played instruments, and danced, using texts written for specific events, to the sound of traditional or new melodies (Meyers 1991: 25). The participation of women in various feminine groups existed elsewhere in the region as well, as exemplified by the archaeological finds in Egypt, or by the women mourners, both in the Old Testament and in the archaeological record.

Anthropological studies of women’s groups have shown that women denied access to them suffer from a lower status than the members, and their lives are dictated by parameters defined by male authorities. By contrast, women enjoying social contacts with other women have the possibility of

achieving a higher standing, both within society as a whole (that is to say, in the eyes of men) and within their own group (Rosaldo 1974: 36–37). This potential is realised especially when the group is active on the public level, beyond the daily life of the household, as shown by the case under discussion (Meyers 1991: 24). Sanday (1974: 192–193) also maintains that the social status of women who organise themselves for different purposes is higher, even though men are the masters of the society, at least in the official view. However, talents and achievements within the group itself are not less important; they allow one to reach a higher position by the operation of group dynamics in accordance with the group's structure and inner hierarchy (Meyers 1991: 24). Women who are members of specific gender groups can thus obtain control over their lives and enjoy feelings of comparative power. This power, even if it does not extend to all the social relationships, contributes to the cultural expression and self-esteem of the group and its participants (Jordan and Calkic 1985: xii; Meyers 1993: 65)²⁹.

In traditional Middle Eastern culture the central role of women in family and social relationship often entitles them the privilege of all-women space, which facilitates the development of female solidarity and inner sense of power and worth (Doubleday 1999: 102–103). This space is the main context for making music (*ibid.*). In Afghanistan, the use of frame drum as the main instruments within women's quarters has a major role in the marriage process (*ibid.*: 116). Thus, the effect of female drumming tradition extends to social relations beyond the immediate household level.

Poethig (1985: 183) observes that the women cited in the Old Testament as initiators of song, such as Miriam, Jephthah's daughter, and Deborah, were born to Israel's social and military élite. It is conceivable that the organisation of the meetings and group activities was undertaken by forceful women of

29 In general, the male public sphere is society's governing authority. But this authority is not necessarily society's only source of power. Max Weber, who developed a theory of social and economic organisation, distinguished between the concepts of authority and power, and his definitions have been adopted by the feminist discussion (Meyers 1988: 41). Rosaldo (1974: 21–22) defines authority as the culturally legitimised right to take decisions and command obedience, whereas power is the ability to exercise control in spite of authority and separate from it. In considering the position of women in society, authority is basically the hierarchical order; it can be anchored in various formal traditions which ostensibly ordain male dominance and female submission. However, irrespective of their legal status, women have an influence which is hidden in those modes of behaviour tied to gender. It is expressed in various informal and unofficial ways, which are perhaps unrecognised by men, but whereby women can wield considerable and consistent power over a range of situations. Although it may lack cultural sanction, it can play a decisive role in social interaction. Authority gives legitimacy to the exercise of power, but does not necessarily make use of it. Thus, there are various situations and roles which allow for control over knowledge and participation in formative events can be accessible to both men and women. This is an arrangement involving reciprocal relationships, and within its framework masculine authority does not comprise an obvious given, nor is female power necessarily manipulative, illegitimate, and insignificant, serving to thwart and undermine authority.

a certain standing. Those who guided the performance were apparently of special status, as shown by their very dominance.

To this day, in different areas of the Mediterranean, public performances of female musicians is led by one or two specialists – the main singer and her ‘assistant’, who are usually accompanied by frame drums (Shiloah 1997). In Iraq there is an all-female drummer ensemble (*daqqaqat*). This formerly Jewish ensemble comprises four or five women playing various drums, led by a woman who is recognized for her fine voice and performing skills (ibid.). The tradition of song and dance to the accompaniment of a drum still exists among Jewish Yemenite women. The drum, which arouses the responses and motor impulses linked to dance and sets its pace, is held by the poetess, who improvises and directs the dance; it symbolises her role as leader and conductor of the performance (Braun 2002: 133).

Research among Aboriginal women in Central Australia examined their ritual traditions, which include rites for women only, alongside public appearances which are open to men and female spectators alike. The private rites comprise music, dance, body painting, etc., their purpose being to invoke the spirits of the ancestors and the supernatural powers, which will assist them in various aspects of their lives (Payne 1993: 1–17). The public performances lack this cultic significance; their purpose is to inform the audience about the women’s world and to please and impress them aesthetically. In these performances, the most talented dancers and singers are stationed near the leader, and their excellence of execution enhances her standing as ritual matriarch. In addition to prestige, she gains influence in asserting her right to land (ibid.: 17–20).

Another example of a women’s group possessing an inner world of its own, as well as standing and power in society at large, is afforded by the Minianka tribe of Mali, in West Africa. Every tribal village has a number of groups called “secret societies” – including those of warriors, hunters, shamans, etc. *Niewoh* is the secret society of women. Young women are admitted after a special initiation ceremony, and only women are allowed to participate in its annual festival, in which ritual music reserved to them alone is played. The leader of the group keeps the statue of the society, and is responsible for the organisation of its activities and meetings. Its purpose is to protect its members, who care for one another by means of mutual assistance. The secret societies of men and women wield considerable power in the social fabric of the village; they create a system of checks and balances within the community, preventing any individual from acquiring excessive influence and knowledge, and centralising power in his own hands (Diallo and Hall 1989: 70–75, 82).

Accordingly, one can surmise that the hand drum in Iron Age Israel, being part of the feminine musical tradition, served as a means for the forging of communal-gender identity and for enhancing the status of those women who identified themselves with this group. In addition to preserving the status quo, whereby women complied with the expectations of male authority and



Figure 6.2. Special characteristics of fertility and sexuality in Type A figurines: 1. Woman with drum and child (A.5, Beth Shean; Beck 1999: fig. 7.7: 7); 2. Nude pregnant women playing a drum (A.7, Gezer; Macalister 1912b: pl. CCXXI: 2); 3. Figure with mixed sexual characteristics (A.42, Tel 'Ira; Beck 1999: fig. 7.5).

performed in the victory celebrations with song, dance, and drumming, the performance also served to convey messages which could promote social change.

According to Meyers (1983: 294–302), the need to win masculine approval arose from the diminution in women's standing from the end of the Bronze Age on. I shall consider this issue in Ch. 7.

6.2.2. Women Drummers in Religious Context

The Archaeological Finds – In 6.1.2, I considered the interpretation of the figures depicted in the plaque figurines, and I identified them as priestesses playing drums in a cultic context. All the figures of this group are female, providing further evidence of the close link between women and drums³⁰.

A number of scholars have proposed that this cult was specifically concerned with fertility. Amr, who believes that the plaque figurines represent the goddess Ashtoret, associates them with such a cult, just as others have ascribed a similar role to the figurines from Mesopotamia (Amr 1980: 118–124). Beck (1990: 89) also relates them to a fertility cult, owing to the connexion she sees between the figures with a round object and those of women holding children. This connexion was established on the basis of a figurine from Beth Shean (A.5); it depicts a woman supporting both a child

30 The only exception is figurine A.42 from Tel 'Ira, which has mixed sex and gender traits. See discussion in 4.1.2.

and a drum (fig. 6.2: 1). One should keep in mind the two figurines (A.7 from Gezer, fig. 6.2: 2, and A.13 from Khirbet Umm el-Butm) which feature pregnant women. It appears that the emphasis on the sexuality of some of the figures, who appear fully naked with their genitals exposed, reinforces the association of the figurines with fertility. This also applies to the bisexual figurine from Tel 'Ira (A.42, fig. 6.2: 3), in which female breasts occur in conjunction with male genitals.

Examples of women drummers within the framework of goddess or fertility cults can be found elsewhere in the ancient Near East: e.g., in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Cyprus.

In Mesopotamian iconography there is a marked connexion between the frame drum, prosperity and fertility of the land and its people (Ochshorn 1990: 22; Doubleday 1999: 105–106). Most scholars relate the figurines of nude women holding drums from the Early Babylonian period to the fertility cult, although opinions are divided concerning the identity of the figures. Scenes depicting cultic rites show that the Mesopotamian temples of the third and second millennium BCE contained a very large, round, frame drum with two bull-leather membranes; they were fastened to the frame by means of large metal studs (Blades 1970: 153, pls. 50–51; Goralı 1977). The bull is a well-known fertility symbol and constitutes a central element in the cult, which is also revealing of the drum's significance (Goralı 1977). After the installation of the drum, it was customary to sacrifice an offering to it (*ibid.*). Amr, who associates the figurines with the goddess Ashtoret holding a drum in her hands, cites a myth about the origin of the drum which appears in the Gilgamesh Epic (Amr 1980: 118–119). According to this myth, in order to prepare the drum from plants, the goddess Inanna needed rain, and Gilgamesh, who is sometimes described as the “omnipotent bull”, symbolising rain, came to her aid. The drum that was made from the tree that arose symbolises fertility (*ibid.*). According to Amr, this reinforces the conjecture that the drummer figurines are personifications of the fertility goddess (*ibid.*). Various Mesopotamian texts from the latter third millennium BCE provide descriptions of the temple drum and women drummers, e.g., the text stating that the granddaughter of Naram-Sin was appointed drummer in the Temple of the Moon at Ur (Blades 1970: 153).

In Egypt, the round frame drum was often linked with notions of birth and rebirth, and thus the general issue of fertility (Ziegler 1977: 203–214; 1979: 39–40; Manniche 1991: 65; Dasen 1993: 78). Various scenes show drums being played in honour of the goddesses Isis and Hathor (Manniche 1991: 65). Beni Hasan has yielded a round frame drum dating to the beginning of the second millennium BCE; its intact membrane is decorated with a woman playing a drum before a goddess (Goralı 1977: no. 189). In a scene displaying a procession of female drummers from the Temple of Dendera, the women wear a kind of hat bearing the emblems of the goddess Hathor – cow horns and the disk of the sun (Manniche 1991: 65; see fig. 6.1: 3). A cultic text from the Eighteenth Dynasty contains the description of a ritual whose

preparations require two pure virgins with wigs of curly hair on their heads and round frame drums in their hands, who will sing during the ceremony (Schott 1950: 158).

An Egyptian tradition ascribes the invention of the drum to Thoth (Blades 1970: 154), but the only gods who actually appear with drums in their hands are Bes and Anubis (Manniche 1975: 5; Ziegler 1977: 210)³¹. Two images of Bes playing a drum were found on a sepulchral altar at Thebes from the reign of Ramesses XI, and a painted wooden statuette of Bes playing a drum is also known from the New Kingdom (Manniche 1975: 3). Other finds from this period include a faience plaque showing Bes with a drum in his hands (Dasen 1993: pl. 4: 1), and paintings of him playing a drum and a flute on a decorated storage-jar from a tomb at Deir el-Medina (ibid.: pl. 6: 5b). A depiction of Anubis playing a drum in a funeral procession was discovered in a Ramesside-period tomb at Thebes (Manniche 1975: 3). Although these are male gods, they have functions associated with the female world (ibid.: 5). Bes is the protector of the household and assists women during labour (Dasen 1993: 67–78). His role as their guardian and helper during pregnancy and birth was especially important, since these were complex events, especially in a traditional society in which the mortality rate among newborns and their mothers was high (ibid.: 68). The figure of Bes playing a drum also appears in erotic scenes, apparently in order to assure fertility (ibid.: 71). Apart from depictions of him dancing and playing diverse instruments, one also finds musical instruments being played in his honour in rare face-to-face images of his personal cult (Manniche 1991: 57). And Anubis, whose principal role was in funerals, is linked in Egyptian art with rebirth. Thus, in Egypt, too, the round frame drum is associated with male and female divinities concerned with the world of women, notably in their act of giving birth and in the fertility cult.

Figurines of women drummers from the Bronze Age and especially the Iron Age³² have been found in abundance in the temples of Cyprus, which attests to the religious context of both the figurines and the subject, i.e., drumming, which was connected, *inter alia*, with the mother-goddess cult.

As to the written sources pertaining to the finds from Eretz-Israel, in the Old Testament women drummers do not appear in cultic contexts. In descriptions of music-making in such contexts, the drum occurs as part of an ensemble which includes other instruments, and the players themselves are apparently male. The absence of any biblical reference to women drummers

31 A goddess called Merit is considered the personification of music, but she never became an actively worshipped deity, with her own temples or shrines (Manniche 1991: 57).

32 Concerning the Cypriote figurines, see 2.2.3. These figurines are of the Phoenician type and are similar to the Type B figurines in the present study. However, it appears that their function in Cyprus differed from that in Eretz-Israel. The Cypriote figurines were absorbed into the local tradition of women drummers in a cultic context which already existed in the Bronze Age, and they represent a continuation of this tradition into the Iron Age.

in a cultic context, and the fact that we have no extra-biblical sources at our disposal in which drumming is mentioned, impedes our interpretation of the finds. However, there is evidence in Eretz-Israel of this period of a goddess cult alongside that of the male god – a cult in which women were actively involved (see 7.4–5). It is possible that women played drums within its framework, as was customary elsewhere in the region.

In reviewing the evidence, it appears to me that the figurines reflect a tradition of drummer priestesses in a fertility cult. And since fertility is often associated with goddesses, it is conceivable that the artefacts relate to the cult of a goddess worshipped by women. Both those scholars who regard the figures as mortal and those who regard them as divine have reached similar conclusions. The position of goddesses and women in the religion of Eretz-Israel in Iron Age II will be considered presently.

The incorporation of music in various cults in different societies aims to create an internal sense of meaning for the society members, rather than to define the group or social framework *vis-à-vis* others (Sullivan 1997: 69). Thus, the choice of the drum as instrument and of women as players reflected the needs of the cult to which they belonged. In various cultures drums, being loaded with mystic ideas and believed to possess supernatural powers, are widely used in ritual and ceremonies (Cirlot 1971: 89; Jenkins 1977: 41–42). The drum was specifically linked with fertility, and its playing was significant both for the needs of the cult itself and for the realisation of the aims for which the ritual was undertaken. The fact that the drummers were women, perhaps priestesses, follows from the basic connexion between women and fertility. Sexual fertility is crucial for procreation, one of the main female functions in the domestic and communal economy. That is to say, the gender paradigm of women drummers in these rituals derives from the character of the cult and its needs.

However, apart from the internal significance of the drum as an instrument linked with the fertility cult, the framework in which this cult existed is also important. The figurines depicting drumming and its cult were found in various contexts – temples, public buildings, tombs, and domestic assemblages. Their occurrence in temples and public buildings, as well as the nature of the figures themselves, indicate that in certain circumstances the drummers performed in an official role. As we will see, the fact that women participate actively and have a religiously recognised function is important in view of their gradual exclusion from the official cult, which apparently commenced in Iron Age II. As I will presently show, even as they were banned from this cult, they continued to observe a domestic fertility cult in which the tradition of female drummers was preserved together with its religious overtones. But now the observance of ceremonies in the domestic arena, at times with other women, gave expression to female power, while simultaneously reinforcing their sense of that power. The position and function of women in their cult in Iron Age II against the background of the social changes and rise of monotheism, will be discussed in Ch. 7.

6.3. The Drum as Part of the Musical Ensemble – The Canaanite Orchestra

The Archaeological Evidence – As we have seen, the only find from Eretz-Israel in which the hand drum is part of an ensemble is the Stand of the Musicians from Ashdod³³. It features a drummer, a lyre-player, and two players of double-reeded flutes. They are probably male. The stand's cultic context suggests that the ensemble performed in religious ceremonies, and it is easily conceivable that the musicians were in the temple's permanent employ (Bayer 1982: 32). M. Dothan (1970a: 95) related the find to I Sam. 10: 5–6 (see Ch. 5).

The Stand of the Musicians from Ashdod is one of a series of cultic stands in a wide range of sizes, shapes, and materials which have been found in Iron Age Israel in various cultural contexts (T. Dothan 1982: 249; Devries 1987: 27–28). Ashdod itself yielded another stand from this period (M. Dothan 1971: fig. 5.1, pl. X: 5). The most common type is made from clay, and normally consists of two parts: a raised cylindrical or conical base and a bowl which surmounts it (Devries 1987: 28).

Their actual use is uncertain, and it is possible that some of the vessels identified as cultic stands served non-religious purposes. Moreover, the cultic stands themselves were assigned different functions, which apparently included the burning of incense, libations, and the presentation of votive offerings (Devries 1987: 27–30). The Musicians' Stand lacks soot marks, and therefore was not used as an incense burner nor as an animal-tray. It could have been used for libation or cultic meals (T. Dothan 1982: 249; Ben-Shlomo 2005b: 184).

33 The Hecht Museum in Haifa has a bronze stamp seal featuring two figures – one playing a lyre and the other a drum (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 221, fig. 229; Braun 2002: 156–157, fig. IV/26). Its provenance is unknown, and doubts have been raised about its authenticity. It is for this reason that I have not included it in the discussion. It was dated to the Iron Age on the basis of various stylistic characteristics. The lyre-player is a man seated on a chair. Opposite him stands a schematic figure wearing a long gown and playing a drum; a number of scholars have identified it as a woman (Braun 2002: 156–157). In my opinion, however, the figure is too schematic for its sex to be determined with assurance. The fact that it is wearing a long gown does not necessarily indicate that a woman is concerned. Between the two figures is an offering-table (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 223–224). If the seal is original, its importance resides in its being the only artefact from Eretz-Israel, except for the Stand of the Musicians, in which the drum appears together with another instrument. The scene seems to depict a cultic performance within a closed venue. If so, it is possible that this reflects another aspect of the ensemble tradition in Israel, albeit on a more limited scale, involving only two musicians. In Braun's opinion (2002: 157), it represents an early stage in the development of the Canaanite Orchestra. The combination of a lyre and a drum is unique. More common in Iron Age II is the pairing of the lyre and the double-reeded flute, which appears on Neo-Assyrian seals (Saller 1966: 187, fig. 7; Giv'eon 1976: 3–5; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 299–305, fig. 299–300; Lawergren 1998: 53–55; Braun 1999: fig. IV/3–7–8).

The uniqueness of the Stand of the Musicians resides in its unusual ornamentation, and the considerable labour invested in its modelling suggests that it was not an article of daily use. Its archaeological context supports this conjecture. As stated above, it was found together with other exceptional objects in an area of ritual function.

The stand stems from a Philistine site, but the stratum in which it was found differs from the earlier levels of the Philistine city, and, according to the excavators, contains clear Canaanite elements. The dominant pottery in the assemblage of Stratum X is the red-slipped repertoire, with only a few examples of 'degenerate' Philistine forms. A small quantity of Philistine Bichrome pottery may have been manufactured or at least used during this period. Thus, the assemblage of Ashdod Stratum X is comparable to Iron IIA (that is, 10th–early 9th centuries BCE) pottery assemblages from other sites in Eretz-Israel, though some Philistine traits had survived (M. Dothan 1970b: 310–311; T. Dothan 1982: 249; Ben-Shlomo 2005b: 185).

Artistically speaking, the stand has a combination of Philistine-Aegean and Canaanite-Phoenician elements (Devries 1987: 36; Ben-Shlomo 2005b: 183–184). In M. Dothan's view (1970b: 311) the modelling and white slip indicate Philistine origin, and the figures are reminiscent of Philistine figurines found in Strata XIII–XI at Ashdod, while closely resembling figurines common on the site in Iron Age II. Further evidence of Philistine influence is afforded by the lyre played by one of the musicians. It has a rounded base and belongs to the western class of lyres. These appear at sites in Eretz-Israel with a Philistine population (Lawergren 1998: 51, 56–57)³⁴. Round-based lyres were already common in Greece and Crete in the Late Bronze Age, and they spread from the Aegean world to Cyprus and Israel with the advent of the Philistines (ibid.: 42, 47). The lyre depicted on the Stand of the Musicians thus comprises additional evidence that this item dates to a period which saw a certain degree of assimilation, but it still exhibits Philistine cultural traits together with Canaanite ones (ibid.: 56).

Despite the Philistine elements in the stand's artistry, it is arguable that the ensemble of musicians is Canaanite in origin. As we saw in 3.4, scholars call this ensemble the Canaanite Orchestra, and it appears on other artefacts from the ancient Near East (see examples on fig. 3.5). The Ashdod stand is presently the only complete instance of such an ensemble from Iron Age Israel.

A recently discovered stand with musicians' figures at Yavneh possibly depicted a similar ensemble³⁵. The stand (Reg. No. 2006–1036) is rectangular.

34 Western lyres with rounded bases are depicted, *inter alia*, on a seal from Ashdod showing a seated figure holding a lyre (M. Dothan 1971: fig. 76: 1; Lawergren 1998: fig. 5, L), and on the sole figurine of a lyre-player from Ashdod (M. Dothan 1971: fig. 62: 1; T. Dothan 1982: pl. 35; Lawergren 1998: fig. 5, R).

35 The stand was found in a large *favissa* of ceramic objects, at the "Temple Hill" near Tel Yavneh, in 2002. Among the finds were 120 elaborated cult stands, and thousands of other pottery vessels and objects. They represent offerings removed from a nearby temple

It presents two lioness protomes, and several human figures. In one of the windows of the stand there are four figures, one is playing a double flute. Ziffer and Kletter (2007: 24–25) suggest that a broken frame held by a second figure is perhaps a lyre, and that a third figure was possibly a drum player. Some of the figures have pronounced breasts, and can be identified as female. As for the musicians, some may represent female figures. The stand seems to represent musicians entertaining a goddess in a temple (*ibid.*). If the suggested reconstruction is correct, the Yavneh Musicians' Stand possibly depicts the same tradition of ensemble music in cultic context in the area of Philistia, in the 9th century BCE.

It is also possible that the figurine fragments from Qitmit, including drums held by hands, a lyre held by hands, and the figurine of a musician playing a double-reeded flute, formed part of a similar stand. If so, we have further evidence of ensemble playing in a cultic context, this time Edomite, in the 7th century BCE.

Furthermore, dating of the stratum yielding the Ashdod Musicians' Stand to the 9th century BCE, following Finkelstein's lower chronology (Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz 2001: 236–242; see 3.4.2), brings the stand into a more suitable setting with respect to the various representations of the ensemble in the region, and even into the period of the biblical testimony.

The Biblical Evidence – The Old Testament provides evidence of similar ensembles in Israel linked to various cultic activities (see Ch. 5). The biblical *tof* has been identified, as stated, with the small hand/frame drum, which appears in various artistic depictions. The *halil* is an aerophone; it occurs on the stand and in other artefacts as a double-reeded flute. The *kinnor* and *nevel* are judged to be types of lyres. *Mena'na'im* and *metsil'taim* are also mentioned; these are believed to be idiophones, of which archaeological excavations have yielded a wide range. In the Canaanite Orchestra, this class is represented by the cymbals. Some scholars believe that the fifth figure on the stand from Ashdod is holding this instrument. In the Old Testament, an ensemble of this kind is mentioned in the narrative about relocating the Ark of the Covenant, which seems to refer to a religious ceremony *par excellence*. In the Book of Samuel, the musicians are described as walking before a group of prophets who, in the biblical phrase, are “prophesising”. Saul is told that, upon joining them, “the spirit of God will descend upon him” and he will become “another man”. It is conceivable that these passages describe situations involving altered states of consciousness, in which music plays a part. Music is known for its ability to influence the spirit of man. At times it serves to soothe his mind, as when David plays the lyre before Saul. But it can also induce ecstasy and trance.

and buried. The finds are dated to the 9th century BCE, according to the pottery assemblage. As in other sites at Philistia from that time, the finds show signs of assimilation with the Canaanite traditions, while maintaining some Philistine characteristics, and thus their distinct identity (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 7–10).

Ethnographic Research – Various ethnographic studies inform us about the cultic function of music and how it can alter states of consciousness. For the Miniankas of Mali, music is, above all, an agency of healing (Diallo and Hall 1989). The musician is also the healer, who treats both physical and mental ills. The tribesmen believe that disease is caused by disharmony between man and his environment and by the spirits which inhabit the invisible world. The musician-healer diagnoses the problem and treats it with the suitable kind of music, which is chosen according to the malady and its symptoms, the patient and his character, and the spirits identified as causing the problem (ibid.: 80–83, 159–161). The members of this tribe also use music, mainly drumming, to achieve a state of trance (ibid.: 83–84).

Ceremonies involving an altered state of consciousness by means of trance are performed by numerous societies throughout the world. In the state of Bahia, in Brazil, I witnessed a rite of Afro-Brazilian candomblé, during which some of the participants beat ecstatically upon drums, while the presiding priestesses began to move with the swelling rhythm of the drums, entering into trance. Nahum Megged (1998: 74–76 and *passim*), who has conducted studies among various Latin American societies, has also described rituals involving such an alteration with the aid of music. Research has shown that a monotonous, repetitive rhythm, a quickening tempo, and gradually rising volume can produce a change in one's state of consciousness (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988: 202; Diallo and Hall 1989: 115–116). It is not necessarily characterised by emotional disarray; ecstasy can also lead to a sense of euphoria and serenity, and even music which is not simply rhythmic drumming can induce such experiences.

The music played by the Canaanite Orchestra in the cultic rites was apparently meant to accompany various activities, solicit the gods, and aid the participants in achieving a heightened state of consciousness for the purposes of prophesy, communication with the deities and supernatural forces, etc.

By assembling the diverse data, one learns that the so-called Canaanite Orchestra was common throughout Eretz-Israel and its environs in the Iron Age. The religious context emerges clearly from the stand from Ashdod, the Yavneh stand, the bowl from Idalion, and the Old Testament. Some of the artefacts show women musicians in the ensemble, and Poethig (1985: 27) claims that they were dominant in examples paralleling the Iron Age in Israel. She infers from this that, at the beginning, woman also had a central role in the ensemble tradition in Israel (ibid.). In most cases, however, including the sole complete instance from Eretz-Israel (the Ashdod stand), the musicians are male. In the Old Testament, as well, although the sex of the musicians is not specified, the context suggests that they are men.

The fact that the Stand of the Musicians was found in a cultic context, together with the contexts of the ensembles in the Old Testament, indicates that this ensemble had a role in the official cult.

Chapter 7

The Social Context of the Women Drumming Traditions

7.1. The Politico-Geographical Context – Israel versus Judah

The distribution of women drummer figurines in Eretz-Israel³⁶ and the finds from elsewhere in the ancient Near East depicting women drummers in diverse settings, clearly indicate that this musical tradition is not unique to Israel. In Meyers' view (1991: 22), it is possible that it originated among the Canaanites, and persisted among the Phoenicians and Israelites, whereby the Phoenicians spread it throughout the region. In my opinion, it is certainly conceivable that the tradition of women drummers in Iron Age II Israel is the outcome of local development, but it also received and absorbed influences from outside.

Women drummer traditions also existed before the Iron Age in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Cyprus. They apparently developed independently in accord with social needs, while proving open to foreign influences and assimilating them into the local practice. Thus, while the women drummers around the region exhibit certain common characteristics, there are also differences which derive from the diverse social contexts in which they performed.

In view of the wide-ranging distribution of women drummer figurines, especially from areas within the borders of the Kingdom of Israel and the kingdoms of Transjordan, their absence in Judah is striking. In his doctorate, Kletter lists a number of figurines which he calls "women drummers from Judah"³⁷. In my opinion, however, they are not women drummers. The round objects, with one exception, are not decorated. Their size varies, but most are

36 For the spatial distribution of the plaque figurines (Type A), see 3.1.5–6. For the distribution of the coastal figurines (Type B), see 3.2.5–6. For the distribution of the hybrid figurines (Type C), see 3.3.3.

37 The figurines Kletter identifies as women drummers are the Judean pillar figurines holding a disk from Gibeon (Pritchard 1961: 16, fig. 41: 557; Kletter 1995: 33, no. 45), Ramat-Rahel (Aharoni 1962: pl. 5; Holland 1975: 118, A.1.g.5; Kletter 1995: 41, no. 118), Tell en-Nasbeh (McCown 1947: pl. 47: 13; Holland 1975: 118, A.1.g.4; Kletter 1995: 48, no. 179), and Jerusalem (Holland 1975: 118, A.1.g.1–3; Kletter 1995: 66, no. 359–361; 86, no. 664).

too large to represent drums. Holland (1975: 181–182) proposes identifying the object as a shield, and even adduces parallels in shield-bearing figurines from Cyprus. As to the posture of the figures holding the object, in most instances the hands are poorly preserved, but some clearly hold it from both sides, unlike the drumming posture depicted in the plaque figurines (Type A in this study) and in the women drummers with a hollow body (Types B and C).

Gezer, which yielded a number of plaque figurines of women drummers, belonged to the Kingdom of Israel, and afterwards to the Assyrian province of Samaria, but it lay close to the border of Judah, and its material culture was mixed (Na'aman 1986: 7; 1987: 211; 1988: 74; Kletter 1995: 44, 314–315).

The plaque figurines of women drummers from Tel Malḥata and Tel 'Ira – sites in Judah's southeastern border zone (Beit-Aryeh 1987: 1; 1998) – appear to have reached this area via contacts and influences originating in Transjordan. The drum fragments from the Edomite shrine at Qitmit also attest to such a provenance. Edomite settlers and material culture penetrated into the eastern Negev in the course of the 7th century BCE (Beit-Aryeh 1986; 1989; 1996; E. Mazar 1985).

Kletter (1995: 98, 314) notes the differences between the figurine assemblages characteristic of Israel and Transjordan and those from Judah, and affirms a connexion between the artefacts and the polities whence they derive. The absence of women drummers from Judah stresses the difference between the material cultures of Judah and Israel. And since the figurines reflect the domains of spirit and action, one can assume that their respective musical traditions were also different.

This difference arises, *inter alia*, from their disparate environmental and geographical conditions. While the Kingdom of Israel was physically open to foreign commerce and influence, and had ramified contacts with such politico-cultural units as the Phoenician coast, the Arameans, and the Neo-Hittite centres, the Kingdom of Judah was more self-enclosed (Finkelstein 1999: 43). The populace of Israel contained a significant component of non-Israelite ethnic groups, which Faust (1999: 207) calls “Canaanite-Phoenician”. These included autochthonous peoples from earlier periods, as well as those belonging to the sphere of the Phoenician cities and the Arameans (*ibid.*: 207–228; 2000: 2–27), living alongside the Israelites. For this reason, Israel evinces a high degree of continuity in its Canaanite culture, especially along the coast and in the valleys (Finkelstein 2003: 189–195).

Israel's continuity and openness, in contrast to the comparative isolation and conservatism of Judah, are reflected in numerous aspects of their material cultures (Finkelstein 1999: 39–48). It is thus not surprising that the figurines under discussion were found in areas under the sway and influence of Israel and its neighbours in Transjordan, while proving absent in Judah. The appearance of women drummers in Israel and Transjordan, especially in the valleys, probably attests to the musical tradition existing here, indicative

of cultural continuity, as seen in the archaeological finds. It is possible that this tradition was not current in Judah. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that women also played drums here, but that this tradition was not central to its culture, and the significance attached to it was different, whereby it is not represented in the artefacts.

7.2. The Gender Pattern of Drumming and its Meaning

A review of the evidence I have presented indicates that in Iron Age Israel the drum was a feminine instrument; it was played by men only in the framework of an ensemble including other instruments.

The association of frame drums and women is attested in ethnomusicological works throughout the Middle East and beyond (Picken 1975: 142; Morris and Rithman 1984; Shiloah 1980: 535; 1995: 159; Doubleday 1999: 101–102). Touma (1977: 107) links the drum with Arab women's dance traditions. In Azerbaijan the frame drum (*def*) is the only instrument allowed in traditional women's surroundings (Kerimova 1996: 4; Doubleday 1999: 102).

In the Balkan, instrumental music is primarily a male domain, but the frame drum is associated with Balkan Muslim Rom female performers, and often accompanies women's singing, at family and community events (Silverman 2003: 120–121). Pettan (2003: 297) recognizes three different domains of using frame drums among Roma people in Kosovo: the female domain, of female singers to frame drum accompaniment; a "transitional" domain of male singers with frame drum, which relates to homosexual men; and a male domain, of male singers with amplified ensemble accompaniment.

A similar gender dichotomy is apparent in ethnomusicological research undertaken in Afghanistan (Sakata 1987). Playing the full range of instruments available here is ascribed to the male domain. Only the frame drum (*daira*) is normally played by women. However, it is considered a "genuine" instrument solely when played by a man in an ensemble (Sarkissian 1992: 343). Doubleday (1999: 116) considers this as part of a pronounced ideology of gender separation, which is defined and imposed by male authority.

It appears that the tradition of women drummers in Iron Age Israel had two facets – cultic and popular (folk). The first represents a continuation of the fertility cult, whose roots probably lay in Canaanite culture, known for the important role it allotted to women and female deities. The second represents a new folk tradition, but one which was not completely divorced from religion, since the victory celebrations, for instance, were held in honour of both the warriors of Israel *and* God. The drum was also played in cultic ensembles whose musicians were men.

The drummer priestesses and especially the popular (folk) genre of the victory song afforded women a voice in society. The activity of the

women was deemed complementary to the men's, and served to maintain the desired social order and fulfil important functions for society in general. The performance of women in the victory celebrations was vital to the event and answered the expectations of the male authority. The participation of drummer priestesses in the fertility cult also answered social needs, and was accepted by the ruling élite, at least during part of the period.

Nevertheless, it is possible that the activity of the women drummers and musician priestesses comprised a challenge to and rejection of certain elements in the ruling ideology, which was essentially masculine. I should like to suggest that the tradition of women drummers included, beyond its obvious components, a subversive horizon of aims and actions. Their public appearance in the victory celebrations gave them the opportunity to stress *their* indispensability and the importance of *their* participation in the event, and to gain recognition and high status, as well as to send messages to the women in the group and to the audience, men and women alike. The continuity of women drummers in the fertility cult, which was slowly excluded from official observance as belief in one God prevailed, served, in my view, to express criticism of the bid to impose the ruling male ideology on religion.

It seems to me that the gender pattern of women drummers in Israel during the period under discussion, the meanings embedded in the diverse genres of drumming, and the figurines that depict them, are the outcome of permanent tension between the ideology of the state and ruling élite and the prevailing ideology of the commoners (the folk). This tension probably arose from the changes which gradually affected the socio-economic structure of Israelite society and its religious world-view over the course of Iron Age II, and which had implications for the status of women.

This interpretation of the tradition of women drummers in the Iron Age agrees with the various studies devoted to the status of women against the background of state formation in Israel – a subject which will be considered presently.

7.3. The Position of Women in Israel in Iron Age II

7.3.1. The Influence of State Formation in Israel on the Social Structure and Position of Women³⁸

The processes involved in the formation of a state entail numerous changes in the organisation and structure of society. These necessarily influence the members of the gender groups and the relations between them. In the view of Concky and Spector (1984: 6), the transition to a state society is accompanied by the suppression of the traditional kinship ties which characterise pre-state

³⁸ It is not my intention to enter into the issue of state formation in Israel, the United Monarchy and its character, and rise of politics in Judah and Israel. I shall only introduce those topics and opinions which are relevant to my study. For a more comprehensive discussion, see, for example, Finkelstein 1999.

societies, leading to a shift in gender status and relationships. Schlegel (1977: 355) claims that the foundation of a nation-state brings about an increase in the importance of the army and the political and religious organisations which govern economic development. When these public institutions, directed by men, become a significant part of the social structure, the power and prestige of women decline.

State formation in Israel under the monarchy brought about dramatic transformations in social and family structure, leading by degrees to the demise of a society in which the family was the central unit. The creation of the state wrought the ruin of the tribal fabric (Reviv 1982: 98–102). It is generally believed that the kinship structure was gradually destroyed, the clans and extended families broke apart, while the nuclear family became dominant (de Vaux 1965: 22–23; Bendor 1986: 111–112 and references there; Faust 1999: 237). Under the monarchy, the former bonds and loyalties were suppressed in order to assure new loyalties to the officials of the state and its administrative districts (Meyers 1988: 190). The extended family as a social unit possessing common political, economic, and religious roles and interests lost its power (de Vaux 1965: 21–23). As a result, hierarchical social relations evolved, while equality and reciprocity declined (de Vaux 1965: 23; Reviv 1982: 98–102; 1993: 5–40; Faust 1999: 15–17, 23–25).

However, since agriculture remained the state's economic mainstay, village life persisted, and Israel did not become a homogeneous urban society (Meyers 1988: 191; Finkelstein 1999: 42; Faust 1999: 237, 241). Alongside the governmental and bureaucratic élites created by the new social order in the cities, in the countryside the productive populace remained at the basis of society. In Faust's opinion (1999: 237), the village sector, unlike the urban sector, was unaffected by the changes incurred by state formation. Reviv (1993: 52) argues that considerable gaps arose between the urban and rural populace, and that the latter was barely touched by the emerging state framework. Bendor (1986: 114–134) even argues that the farmers were the majority in Israel, and since they were uninfluenced by the transformation, their social structure was practically unharmed. In his view, the kinship remained the basis of Israelite society throughout the term of its existence, and the families preserved their traditional structure even in the cities.

The transformation which affected Israelite society with the formation of the state was gradual and influenced the various sectors of the populace in different degrees. Still, it appears that the change in the structural and organisational conception of society posed a threat to the system of kinship ties characterising the traditional household – Israel's socio-economic basis in former times. This system probably underwent a gradual process of disintegration, especially in the growing urban sector. Nevertheless, the basic units of the household continued to exist in considerable portions of the new state, and preserved pre-monarchical norms and values, even if the centre of power had shifted (Meyers 1988: 195).

The transfer of centrality from the household to the public (politico-economic) arena was also significant from the point of view of gender. It involved the transition from a domain considered female to another of male domination. In the opinion of several scholars, the status of women suffered a detrimental change over the course of the Iron Age. Even if their functions within society were the same, the respect accorded them declined (Gadon 1989: 181–185; Lyung 1989: 73). According to Meyers (1983: 294–302), the changes described above were part of an ongoing process of political and social transformation that commenced at the end of the Bronze Age. She contends that, in view of the rising political and military power of men as the focus of society, women were forced to invest more in the household, in supporting their husbands, and in strengthening the agricultural sector. Gradually, their status in society waned. It seems to me, however, that her claims should be qualified. Meyers was apparently influenced both by the older analyses of the androcentric biblical text, e.g., Wellhausen's (1897: 89–90), and, by contrast, by modern feministic attitudes. She herself argues that, within the extended family household, which remained in existence, especially in the countryside, women were economically productive, and continued to perform a central role (Meyers 1983: 190–191). I believe that her contention regarding the decline in the status of women may be correct for those elements of the populace, in the cities, for example, which were influenced by the process of state formation and the ensuing changes in social structure. Further, this decline was probably part and parcel of the gender ideology of the ruling élite, as I now propose to show.

7.3.2. Gender Ideologies of Dominance and Resistance in a State Society

According to Giddens (1979: 192–193), governmental ideology seeks to bolster the existing hierarchical order and conceal society's inner contradictions, which are liable to undermine it. In order to obtain wider legitimacy for actions which serve the cause of the ruling élite, it attempts to justify its sectarian interests by arguing that reality and the social norms oblige them. And in order for the subject classes to confront the daily experience of contradiction between this ideology and their own ideas and material interests, it is important for them to formulate their own world-view (Brumfiel 1996: 161).

However, it is important to note that the ruling ideology is largely dependent upon communication and bonds between the subject regions and the political centres (*ibid.*: 160). These bonds result in part from an economic system whose intensive interaction facilitates the penetration of the state ideology (*ibid.*). According to Faust (1999: 227), the cities in Israel's northern valleys were "symbols of power" for the local populace, serving to grant legitimacy to the government and the new social order. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that the ability of the élite to establish ideological

hegemony among the masses, especially in the countryside, whose populace contained a foreign element, was limited, since the efficacy of ideology as a mechanism of state rule is less outside the cities and other governmental centres (Brumfiel 1996: 146). The government is unable to control the minds of the people, whereby the ruling ideology does not necessarily extend to ideological rule. At times, the influence of the ruling ideology is most palpable in popular criticism levelled against it (ibid.: 161).

As to gender ideologies in a state society, the argument is that women, identified with the domestic arena, were subject to unremitting efforts by the rulers to render them submissive, since the ideological domination over women is a metaphor and mechanism for the rule of the state over the kinship-based household (ibid.: 146).

Nevertheless, the gender ideology of domination over women is not always palpable and realisable. In the agriculture villages, far from the governmental centres, women continued to perform their central role in the household. It appears that in the context of daily life there was practically no contact between the representatives of the élite and women engaged in their tasks, whereby the latter exercised significant control in the domestic arena. Thus, even if male domination was inevitable on the public level, one can assume that it did not extend to ideological hegemony in the separate sphere of the household, where women could express themselves with considerable freedom (Scott 1985: 329–330). Furthermore, it is conceivable that in the contents and structure of their domestic activities, there was a covert and sometimes subconscious resistance to the élite ideology³⁹. But since there was no daily contact between these women and the ruling class, one cannot speak of a systematic rejection of this ideology (ibid.).

7.3.3. Opposition, Open and Covert, by the Commoners and Women in Israel

The ruling ideology of the state society coming into being in Israel apparently promoted the oppression of women, this being the outcome of socio-economic interests. The changes which occurred in the social structure gradually eroded their power and status, especially in the cities and in the areas adjoining the centres of government, and eventually they affected the more remote rural regions. As stated, however, it proved difficult to establish the ruling ideology among the masses, even if it was “advertised” as natural and inevitable. The country folk maintained their social framework and traditional values, which served their proper interests. Preserving the household as the basic social unit also assured the position and importance of the women within it. I would like to propose that the socio-cultural continuity among substantial portions of the Israelite populace represents a rejection of the state ideology; it can

39 Doubleday (1999: 102–103) argues that women within an all-women space may privately resent aspects of male ascendancy, holding an inner sense of power and worth which is acquired by different activities, *inter alia* music making.

even be considered a kind of ideological opposition. It was based upon the perseverance of traditions and was sometimes subconscious, but it is possible its various activities forged new and deliberate values which challenged the state ideology. This also applies to the actions of women within their domestic sphere.

In my opinion, the tradition of women drummers in Israel served to express a popular (folk) gender ideology, of which the figurines are a material reflection. It was applied in daily life, and was not influenced by the ruling male ideology. In the state of tension that existed between the reception and rejection of the latter, drumming in its various manifestations was a means of popular resistance in general, and female resistance in particular. For example, drumming in the context of the "victory song" entailed appearing in the public arena in an event which expressed the ruling ideology, and which involved contact between the women and the élite. However, moving to this venue, ostensibly as an indispensable component of a celebration that warrants male approval, was also a means for the women to express their covert and conscious opposition to the ruling ideology, which sought to assert control over them.

If there was, in fact, an attempt to reduce the status of women in the Iron Age from its level in earlier periods, opposition to the male ideology and the aspiration of women to attain a higher standing seem logical. This goal could be achieved by two means. Firstly, by uniting in a women's group – by participating, in the present instance, in a victory song around a common aim and activity within the group itself. Secondly, by public activity, i.e., by performing before an audience of men and national leaders, whereby the participating women gained recognition of their indispensability to the public life of the society, not just to the domestic sphere. Assuming that not all the women of the society were participants in this performance, the latter also served to convey a tacit message to them, which was meant to inspire feelings of belonging and strength.

It is important to note that popular (folk) gender ideology does not mean "for women only". It rather refers to traditions involving wide sectors of the populace, both men and women. The world-view of the women, their activities as participants possessing common interests, and as a group within society – these represent just one aspect of this ideology. The tension between the gender ideology of the government and that of the people was only part of the ideological struggle, which embraced practically all areas of life. For at least a portion of the Iron Age, the influence of popular culture was admitted and accepted by the monarchy and ruling élite. But even when attempts were made to suppress this alien culture, it proved difficult to extirpate those characteristics which had already been absorbed by the masses, alongside the numerous traditions and traits deriving from the indigenous Canaanite culture, and which continued in existence.

The figurines of women drummers constitute, in my opinion, a material expression of this popular and feminine ideological resistance, as I will explain in Ch. 8.

7.4. The Place of Women in the Cult

7.4.1. Official Cult and Popular Religion

Archaeological and biblical studies make extensive use of the expression “official religion” or “official cult”, as opposed to “popular religion”, but the meaning is not always clear. Scholars have defined official religion as a system of beliefs and practices which is dictated and governed by professional institutions of religion, such as the state, while popular religion is a comparable system of religious character which is not governed by any religious institution (Vrijhof and Waardenburg 1979: 268; Holladay 1987). Ackerman (1992: ix) defines popular religion as a system which is different from the creed considered normative in the Bible. But this negation-based definition is problematic, and is liable to lead to a conception of popular religion as a forbidden and subversive practice of deviant norms, mainly observed by the lower orders of society (Kletter 1995: 78). A more moderate definition was proposed for Egypt of the New Kingdom, where the national religion was that which was observed in the temples by priests and officials in the name of the pharaoh, while popular religion included beliefs and customs which were honoured outside these temples, not just by the lower classes (Sadek 1988). Both systems were deemed forms of the same basic creed, and not separate entities (Kletter 1995: 78). Since the socio-political background of Israel in the period under discussion is totally different, I believe that such a definition is inapplicable here. Nevertheless, the idea of an official religion and a popular religion rubbing against one another is possibly correct for at least part of Iron Age II, as I will discuss below. Furthermore, so-called popular religion was the legacy of large portion of the populace, not just the lower orders – mainly, as I plan to show, of groups possessing a different ethnic and cultural background.

7.4.2. The Exclusion of Women from the Official Cult

Against the background of socio-economic changes and the simultaneous rise of Israelite monotheism⁴⁰, attempts were made to reject the Canaanite cult, including the goddesses who played an important role in it. Women were apparently excluded by degrees from the public cult and priesthood (Poethig 1985: 246–248). Sendrey (1969: 516) argues that the Israelite priesthood slowly developed an anti-female tendency, which finally brought about their removal from every ritual function. In his view, this androcentrism is expressed in the way the writers of the biblical text omit mentioning female participation in the cult. Bird (1987: 406) claims that the priestly offices in Israel were reserved for men, while women were confined to functions

40 For the rise of monotheism, the changes in the cult, and the exclusion of women, see 7.5.

of maintenance and support, indispensable to the cult's existence, but not requiring priestly status.

Women were excluded from active participation – as priestesses or musicians – in the cult, at least during the latter days of the Monarchy and the Second Temple period. The women drummers performed in popular ceremonies outside the sanctuary walls, while the musicians inside were all men (Bayer 1963: 39–42; Bird 1987: 418–419, n. 39). Women were gradually denied a role in the various religious events, whereas previously they had served in the fertility rites of the different goddesses. The exclusion of the priestess-musicians from the official cult in favour of the male ensemble can be inferred from the passages in the Old Testament describing drumming (see Ch. 3 and 5).

According to Meyers (1988: 35–36), the circumstance that the religious offices were more accessible to men and enabled them to gain a higher status, does not necessarily imply a low position for women. It is conceivable, in her view, that the exclusion of women from the priesthood was a functional measure, or the result of various taboos, but is not in itself an indication of the belief in women's inferiority.

7.4.3. Women and the Domestic Cult

If so, where was the focus of the women's cultic activity? In all the most important institutions in the male public sphere, their roles (insofar as they existed) were limited or marginal. The leadership positions of the official religion were rarely occupied or performed by women (Rosaldo 1974: 19–21). Various ethnographic studies have shown that the religious activities and needs of women tend to focus on the domestic arena, and are connected with what is considered their sexually-defined function: various rites comprising part of the life cycle – especially birth and death; domestic rites in the company of other women (often with women who guide and command them); and small local shrines, more suitable to their spiritual needs and feelings and mode of existence, as opposed to rites in the central temple and the activities surrounding it (Bird 1987: 400, 410). It is a hidden domain of female rituals enacted solely within the domestic sphere or in the company of other women, and which sometimes comprise the emotional focus of their religious life. It mainly occurs where women's participation in the central cult is limited, and is sometimes deemed provocative or subversive (*ibid.*: 408). As I argued earlier (6.3), their activity in the domestic sphere was remote from the eyes of the ruling class, and it expressed their subconscious resistance to the ideology behind the central cult, even if they chose not to challenge it openly.

It seems to me that the role of women drummers in the fertility rites within the context of the official cult was retained for at least part of the Iron Age, since representations of women musicians, perhaps priestesses, have been found in sacred and public archaeological settings. However, in

the latter days of the Monarchy, with the gradual exclusion of women from active participation in the official cult, the focus of these fertility rites was transferred to the domestic arena, where they continued in existence. The plaque figurines of the women drummers had a place in this cult, and they reflect, *inter alia*, the opposition of women to their exclusion from the official cult. I shall elaborate on the role of these figurines in Ch. 8.

7.5. Goddesses in the Cult

7.5.1. Goddesses in the Iconography of the Iron Age

Keel and Uehlinger (1998) have examined in depth the iconographical depiction of divinities from Middle Bronze Age II until the end of the Iron Age. A summary of their data affords a wider chronological context for the period under discussion here, and attests to a general decline in the status of the goddesses *vis-à-vis* the male gods:

In Middle Bronze Age II, the male and female divinities were represented equally in art, and renditions of goddesses (in fertility settings included) were wrought in valuable metals, in addition to other materials (*ibid.*: 47–48).

Depictions of goddesses in metal continue into the Late Bronze Age, but then disappear. They are supplanted by male warrior deities. The “naked goddess”⁴¹ vanishes from diverse forms of art. Her anthropomorphic representations are rare, and she is merely symbolised by her attributes. On those few occasions on which she is portrayed anthropomorphically, she is the patron deity of a city or a warrior deity, i.e., in more “virile” roles (*ibid.*: 96). In parallel to the increasing suppression of the goddesses in the period’s “official” religion, the clay figurines of the “naked goddess” become more common (whereas male deities are almost never wrought in this material). Pottery, which was cheaper than metal, allowed for the continuation of her

41 One can ask whether these are really goddesses or simply women. The basis of their identification is unclear, since the naked female appears during this period without any specifically divine attributes. As such, it is possible that these are women whose nudity associates them with the fertility cult. M. Tadmor (1982), who studied similar figurines from the Late Bronze Age, argued that the figure is not a goddess, but rather a woman lying on a bed, similar to the concubines in Egyptian art.

In my opinion, the figurines of naked women cannot necessarily be construed as divinities. Many scholars deem them evidence of the ongoing influence of the “prehistoric Mother-Goddess”, and even identify the figures with various divinities or as the embodiment of certain of their traits (Goodnick-Westenholz 1998: 65). Attempts have been made to ascribe to the figures nonreligious functions, e.g., as children’s dolls or agencies in magic. Some of these proposals are problematic, being inconsistent with the distribution of the figurines and the archaeological contexts in which they occur. However, it is conceivable that they served purposes of imitative magic, e.g., as fertility or burial amulets meant to assure the deceased a feminine companion in the next world, in which case their importance resided, not in fertility, but rather sex-appeal (Van der Toorn 1998: 92–94).

cultic tradition, and she apparently entered the private domain, becoming accessible to everyone at the focus of small domestic cults (*ibid.*: 97).

In Iron Age I, the decline in the status of the goddesses proceeds. They appear exclusively in simple clay mould-made figurines which only served in the personal cult within the framework of religious rituals performed by women. Apart from these figurines, female fertility is not depicted anthropomorphically, but only by means of symbols. By contrast, male warrior divinities are rendered anthropomorphically, with stress upon their power and authority (*ibid.*: 128–131).

In Iron Age II, following the almost total disappearance of the goddess in the iconography of Iron Age I, deities of both sexes are depicted anthropomorphically. Male gods are portrayed as warriors, and project strength and dominance. An important role is assigned to the bull (a male fertility symbol), which is associated with the Storm-God. The female figurines occur just in clay. According to Keel and Uehlinger (*ibid.*: 173–175), the status of the goddess waned significantly, but her worship endured in the personal-domestic cult. The naked goddesses vanish by degrees, being supplanted by new types, mainly that of the woman drummers⁴². The writers aver that the figures are naked at the period's outset, but that there is an ongoing tendency to clothe them, whereby they then appear as partially or fully dressed (*ibid.*: 164). This assertion is problematic, however, since only a few figurines derive from controlled excavations whose archaeological contexts enable accurate dating. Accordingly, it is impossible to confirm this pattern, especially since the figurine from Gezer, which Keel and Uehlinger cite as an example, is 8th century BCE in date, and is probably totally naked, with its female genitals stressed.

7.5.2. Goddesses in Historical Sources

In addition to artistic representations, there are also written sources which clearly attest to the existence of a goddess alongside the god in Iron Age II. Aside from the various biblical descriptions of a foreign cult that included the worship of Asherah, there are the inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qôm. The latter is located in Judah, while the southern site of Kuntillet 'Ajrud is actually linked to the Kingdom of Israel in the north. The inscriptions refer to Yahweh *and* his Asherah (Dever 1993: 1233–1235; Meshel 1993: 1461–1463).

⁴² Keel and Uehlinger's contention that there is a return to the anthropomorphic portrayal of goddesses in Iron Age II is problematic. They themselves reject of the interpretation of the plaque figurines of the women drummers – a considerable portion of the finds – as divine (1998: 166–167; see discussion of this issue in 4.2.2), but they nonetheless consider them substitutes for the naked goddess figurines. This reinforces their argument that the status of the goddesses declined, but they fail to relate to the inscriptions from Iron Age II in which female deities are mentioned, and which clearly show that they continued to play a part in the cult (see 7.5.2).

Numerous scholars have examined these inscriptions in the hope of understanding Asherah's significance and place in them (Lemaire 1977; 1994; Meshel 1979; Beck 1982; Emerton 1982; Dever 1984; 1999; Hadley 1987; Smith 1990; 1994). Some have identified Asherah of the inscriptions as a wooden pole which symbolised the deity, but was not the deity herself (Lemaire 1977; Emerton 1982: 2–20; Day 1986: 385–408; Hadley 1987: 50–62; Tigay 1987; Smith 1990: 82–83). Today, however, there is a growing tendency to identify Asherah with the actual goddess – Yahweh's consort (Coogan 1987: 115–124; Miller 1987: 58–59; Ackerman 1992: 189–193; Binger 1997: 110–141; Van der Toorn 1998: 90; Dever 1999: 11*).

The inscriptions show that – in certain circles, at least – Yahweh was linked with Asherah. Which circles? The site of Kuntillet 'Ajrud was apparently a mercantile way-station, and belonged to the Northern Kingdom. The texts are religious in character, and comprise common blessing formulae (Van der Toorn 1998: 89). One of them refers to the god of Samaria – the capital of the kingdom or the name of the kingdom itself. Thus, some scholars believe that these blessings do not express a non-conformist doctrine, but rather reflect concepts and practices prevalent in the Kingdom of Israel's official cult from the start, until they were proscribed by later reform movements (Olyan 1988: 23–37; Van der Toorn 1998: 90). Others contend that the worship of Asherah formed part of a popular, domestic cult (Dever 1999: 12*, n. 31 and additional references there). But whether official or popular, the presence of the goddess at Yahweh's side induced the prophetic and Deuteronomistic circles to censure the goddess and her cult (*ibid.*: 11*).

The inscriptions attest to the ongoing worship of Asherah as a female deity, the consort of the male god Yahweh, even in the course of the 8th century BCE. This evidently represents the survival of the Canaanite cult, in which Asherah, Ashtoret, or Anat was the consort of Baal or El (Kletter 1996: 75–76). When Yahweh usurped their position as official male deity, the female deity continued to serve as his companion.

7.5.3. Asherah's Place in the Cult of Israel in Iron Age II

It appears that Asherah's status as consort was not comparable to Yahweh's as the principal male deity (Van der Toorn 1998: 91). Even when her presence is obvious, she is secondary, affixed to the god. In art, as well, she is only portrayed in her feminine aspects, no longer as the goddesses were formerly, as warriors in a male capacity. Some scholars accordingly deem Asherah a deity linked to women, a fertility goddess (e.g., Gadon 1989: 172–173; Lyung 1989: 59; Serwint 2002: 333–334). It is possible that goddesses who diverged from the normative feminine roles of mother and wife comprised a threat to the patriarchal ideologies of society and gender (Goodnick-Westenholz 1998: 81). Thus, even their presentation in traditional roles (as mother and wife) was incomplete, and involved an androgenous denial of the power latent in femininity; that is to say, power was accessible only to

the virile. The representation of the goddess as a secondary, accompanying figure reflects the wilful attempt to divest her of her power⁴³.

Some scholars believe that the secondary position of the goddess alongside the god reflects the actual status of most women in relation to their husbands in the period concerned (Van der Toorn 1998: 91). Nevertheless, it seems to me that there was tension between their official and unofficial gender standing, as evinced by the goddesses in their cults. The rejection of the goddess by the official cult and the decline of her standing, while the sole male god accrued power, was part of the ruling élite's ideology⁴⁴. The depiction of the goddess as a lesser figure, the mere companion or concubine of the puissant male god, reflects the ideology of the government in its relation to women, and comprises an attempt to impose this ideology by means of religious observance on the other classes of society.

The decline in the standing of the goddesses, as delineated above, was a gradual process, and culminated in the rise of monotheism. Yahweh as the one and only (male) god appropriated all the divine roles, including those, such as fertility, that were formerly reserved to goddesses (Poethig 1985: 245–246). Nevertheless, it is obvious that the imposition of monotheism was a long and complex undertaking, as can be seen from the copious evidence that Canaanite culture persisted, and influences from the region, where polytheism was dominant, continued to infiltrate. The various descriptions of paganism (i.e., the worship of foreign gods) in the Old Testament attest to the difficulties faced by monotheism in establishing itself in Israel. We are informed that its introduction as the official creed involved unremitting struggle, culminating in the Josiah's reform in the 7th century BCE. Even though it was focussed on Judah, it also influenced Israel (Kletter 1995: 13–14). The Old Testament repeatedly repudiates the other gods in the comprehensive Deuteronomistic condemnation of the Baals and Ashtorets (the Canaanite gods and goddesses), e.g., in Judges 2: 11–13. "Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians" is specifically mentioned in I Kings 11: 5, 33 (Lipinsky 1986: 93). Nevertheless, the inscriptions from Khirbet el-Qôm and Kuntillet 'Ajrud prove that various shrines were also dedicated to Asherah, and the inclusive censure of them results from the Deuteronomistic reform and the centralisation of the "legitimate" cult in Jerusalem during Josiah's reign (*ibid.*).

Thus the goddess had a place in the official cult during most the Iron Age, but her role was evidently more important in the daily life of the simple folk. And Asherah's appearance in official settings, such as Kuntillet 'Ajrud and

43 Brenner (1999: 58) claims that the interpretation of Asherah as a mere companion derives from the androcentric penchant of the scholars, and does not necessarily accord with the reality of the period under consideration.

44 One should bear in mind that the worship of Asherah was also acceptable among the élite in the Kingdom of Israel during part of the period under discussion, while the rise of monotheism was more marked and significant in neighbouring Judah, although it also exerted influence on Israel.

her introduction by the kings of Judah into the temple in Jerusalem, shows that her worship was not restricted to women (Kletter 1995: 187–188). Van der Toorn (1998: 96–97) believes that her cult was popular, not in spite but because of her inferior standing. It is possible, he suggests, that her position at the god's side rendered her closer than her husband to the people, whereby she could act as an mediator being for them, as it were, Yahweh's human face.

It is also possible to construe the persistence of Asherah's cult as a covert or subconscious form of resistance, as expressed on two levels: First of all, as a protest by the worshippers to God's growing inaccessibility. And, secondly, as specifically female opposition to the authority's attempt to relegate the goddess and women in general to secondary status next to men. This is attested by the increasing worship of Asherah by both men and women in the domestic cult. I shall elaborate upon this cult, of which the figurines were part, in 8.2.

So long as Asherah's place in the official cult was secure, one can assume that women, including drummer priestesses, played an active religious role. But as they were gradually expelled from the official arena, their attention turned to the domestic (female) cult. It is conceivable that in the framework of its fertility rites, it was women who presided over the event and served as priestesses of sorts. Perhaps they also played drums, which retained their significance both for fertility and as a female emblem. The position of women drummers in the official cult was gradually usurped by ensembles of male musicians, whose function was more suitable to the new religion's character.

Chapter 8

The Purpose, Use, and Meaning of the Figurines

8.1. The Meaning of Figurines – Theoretical Studies and Possibilities

Material culture is an indirect reflection of a society, in that ideas and aspirations intervene between people and their handiwork (Hodder 1986: 3). It not only reflects a certain social and ideational reality, but is also instrumental in forming relations between the members of a given society and the surrounding world. Since it arises from an individual's role and aspirations within his world, material culture is a means of forging meaning (Hodder 1986: 6–9; Leone 1998: 50). It is thus important to examine the aspirations and motivations which produce it.

The wide-ranging depiction of women drummers in clay figurines of various types raises numerous questions concerning their significance: Why was this particular theme chosen? Why were the figurines rendered in clay? And is there any special meaning attached to the different and complex technologies employed in their production? What are the ideas expressed by the figurines? And what is the gender ideology, i.e., the world-view, conveyed by the symbolic meanings of femininity and masculinity?⁴⁵ And what were the functions and uses of the figurines?

The range of meanings and uses were many and diverse. In his study of the prehistoric figurines from Mesopotamia, M. Voigt (1984) divided the anthropomorphic examples into the different categories attested by ethnography; she attempted to ascribe each figurine to the fitting type on the basis of its characteristics. These categories include: cultic depictions of supernatural beings – of symbolic importance or objects of worship; magic devices linked, for example, to fertility and birth rites; didactic figures or objects serving to teach values or facts in initiation ceremonies; toys; representations of the dead or of persons associated with them and employed as sepulchral objects.

The ascription of the figurines to the different categories was based, among other criteria, on their archaeological contexts⁴⁶, on attributes indicative of

⁴⁵ For an extensive discussion of gender ideology, see Conkey and Spector 1984.

⁴⁶ Fowler (1985: 333–344) argues that the finding of a figurine in a certain site does not

function, and on patterns of disposal (Kletter 1995: 70–71). These principles will prove useful in interpreting the figurine types under discussion here.

It is important to note that the interpretation of the figurines is impeded by the lack of written records. It is possible that similar figurines possessed dissimilar functions owing to changing circumstances and their differing cultures.

8.2. The Plaque Figurines (Type A)

As I have shown, the plaque figurines of a woman holding a round object reflect a tradition of drummer priestesses in a cult. The figurines had some role in a fertility rite. However, although their connexion with a cult is widely accepted, numerous scholars have claimed that their actual function therein remains unclear. Ascertaining it is hindered by the circumstance that their uses were not necessarily identical in all the archaeological contexts in which they occur.

These were diverse, and represent the full gamut of human activity: various houses and structures (Aphek, Tel Malhata, Tel 'Ira), public buildings (Megiddo, Samaria), tombs (Megiddo, sites in Transjordan), and shrines (Megiddo, Taanach).

At least some of the figurines were found in cultic contexts, and it is reasonable to assume that they had some religious function. The figurines on the shrine model from the area of Kerak buttress this conjecture, even though the find does not derive from a clear archaeological context. The mould found in the fill of the temple at Taanach suggests that figurines of this type were mass produced (Hillers 1970: 606–619). Their manufacture within the temple precincts implies that they had an established place within the public cult, at least during part of the period. In Amr's view (1980: 120), the figurines found in the temples served in a fertility cult. Since I am inclined to identify the figures as women rather than goddesses, it is clear that they were not the actual objects of worship. It is possible that the devotees were able to acquire them for their personal use – as votive offerings in the temple itself, perhaps as souvenirs of their pilgrimage or of temple celebrations, or for a domestic cult.

The figurines and fragments recovered from houses clearly served in domestic settings. Their manufacture from clay and abundance rendered them inexpensive articles accessible to everyone. Their use in a household cult arose from the process described in Ch. 7, whereby women were excluded from the official cult and the goddesses were likewise withdrawn by degrees.

necessarily prove that it was cultic, since not all the figurines were divinities. This caveat stresses the importance of understanding the archaeological context of the figurines in order to interpret them, and not the opposite, i.e., interpreting the site on the basis of the figurines.

As a result, the focus of women's religious observance was transferred to the home, and, as the figurines attest, the goddess joined the personal-domestic cult, which was mainly run by women. Even if the figurines themselves are not goddesses, the cult involving them reflects the importance ascribed to the supernatural forces concerned with the spheres of life – fertility in the present case – whose peace or security were precarious. The figurines found in houses evidently served in such a cult (Amr 1980: 120). They were amulets or symbols evoked in rites of fertility and birth. The example from Aphek, evidently stashed in a covert in the house, illustrates the special significance attached to figurines of this type in the home milieu.

As to the public contexts, it is reasonable to assume that most (excepting the palaces) were accessible to broad sectors of the populace (Kletter 1995: 154), so that the figurines found there could have been in the possession of an official or visitor. The figurines from the storeroom structure at Samaria provide further evidence of their importance in the fertility cult. The existence of such a cult in the repositories of grain and similar produce is logical, since, despite its primary connexion with sexual procreation, it could also have served in a cult of agrarian fertility.

Figurines were also found in tombs. Amr (1980: 120) has suggested that those of this type protected the deceased from the evil eye. It is also possible, in my view, that they were placed alongside women who had used them in their domestic cult. Or, alternatively, that they were meant to accompany men to the next world and assure their continuing fertility there. Still another possibility is that they were connected with the theme of rebirth in the afterlife.

Figurine fragments tossed about randomly on the sites create certain problems for their interpretation as ritual objects. Nevertheless, it is possible that, after having been damaged, they lost their efficacy and meaning, and became ordinary refuse. This surmise reinforces my suggestion that they were representations of women, rather than goddesses. If the latter were the case, one would expect that the figurines withdrawn from use would have been granted special treatment, such as interment.

As I have already averred, since the figurines portrayed women, not goddesses, they were not the object of worship, but rather mediators in the cult. They were reflections of figures who had formerly played a role in official observances – drummer priestesses in fertility rites. Their perpetuation in clay turned them into symbols on a personal, domestic level in rites concerned with procreation and the women's world in general. It is furthermore possible that they had an extra-cultic use in consecration and protection. They preserved the memory of the temple cult, while transforming it into a living component of the domestic setting (Van der Toorn 1998: 94–95).

Keel and Uehlinger (1998: 166–167) contend that the women drummer figurines comprise an iconographic substitute for the goddess in Israel, just as Deborah the prophetess (the “mother of Israel”), replaces the warrior goddess. I agree. The figurines provide a kind of compensation for the “loss

of the goddesses” on the public level, and hint at a “subversive” stratum in Israel’s religion. Even though Asherah is mentioned at Yahweh’s side, her status and role were marginal and superficial, and it is plain that there were unremitting attempts to eliminate the goddesses from the official cult, just as women were excluded from active participation in it.

The figurines are a physical expression of mass resistance to the cultic changes the rulers were seeking to effect, and they stress how difficult this undertaking was. For the owners, the figurines signified continuity in cult and popular belief, in spite of the state’s attempt to impose monotheism. The women possibly saw in their figurines a symbol for the participation of women and priestesses in the cult, even though the role of the female drummers was at odds with official observance, as it was crystallising at this time. As I noted above (7.1), the Kingdom of Israel contained various Canaanite strains and enclaves in its populace. These people continued to follow their own ethnic and religious traditions, and opposed the state then coming into being in its bid to impose its official ideology. A considerable portion of the figurines have, in fact, been found in the area of the northern valleys, where these Canaanite elements were pronounced. It is interesting to observe, however, that while some derive from rural sites, where most of this population lived (see 7.1, 7.3), others were found in nearby urban centres, such as Megiddo, Taanach, and Samaria. Faust (1999: 227) contends that the cities were symbolic of the new state power *vis-à-vis* the Canaanite population in the villages. If so, even in the governmental centres there were people who preserved the ethnic and religious traditions of Canaan. One can even suggest that the discovery of the figurines in public and sacred contexts on these sites, alongside others from domestic contexts, indicates that the ideological confrontation here between sizeable sectors of the populace and the ruling élite was greater here than in the villages.

In brief, I believe that the figurines attest to cultic continuity (with Canaanite currents) in Israel throughout most of Iron Age II against the background of the formation of the state and the desire to remodel it politically, culturally, and religiously.

It is interesting to note that in Judah, too, it is possible to cite similar ideological resistance to the changes in the cult promoted by the rulers. Here it was expressed by means of pillar figurines. According to Kletter (1995: 310–311), they were inexpensive and easily obtainable representations of Asherah; they were in private possession and were mainly used in daily life; it is conceivable that they had magic applications. In this case, however, one cannot ascertain any clear connexion between the figurines and official religious structures (*ibid.*). This domestic cult with Asherah at the centre attests to a stratum of popular resistance to the ruling ideology and the monotheism it sought to instate.

8.3. The Figurines of the Phoenician Type (Type B)

The Phoenician figurines of women drummers were produced by a composite method described in 2.2.7. It demanded a high degree of skill by professional craftsmen, and the notable unity (despite stylistic variants) of the figurines of this type reflects a guiding principle and perhaps a limited number of craftsmen and workshops specialising in their manufacture. In Cyprus, an abundance of these figurines was found in temples, and it seems that the workshops were attached to them. The Cypriote figurines, however, are later than those from the Phoenician coast, and the striking resemblance between them indicates that Phoenician craftsmen set up their workshops in Cyprus and introduced their methods. It is unclear where the figurines found in Eretz-Israel were made; it is conceivable that there were only a few production centres. It is difficult to know whether the methods of manufacture attest to “gender technology”. The decisive majority of the figurines represent women (including those of women with a bird or some inanimate object); there are very few exceptions, such as those of male flute-players. But it is quite possible that the artisans themselves were men. The considerable labour invested in the figurines derived from the special significance assigned them.

In Israel, the figurines of the Phoenician type were mainly found in tombs, whereas along the Phoenician coast and in Cyprus many derive from public and cultic contexts. This implies that in Phoenicia and Cyprus women drummers had a role in the official cult, which also explains the use of these figurines in religious settings.

In Israel, as stated, most of the figurines of this type were found in tombs. Objects introduced into tombs fulfilled a certain role in the sepulchral cult (E. Mazar 1996: 110). Some scholars believe that the women drummer figurines entertained the gods and the deceased with music (Karageorghis 1987: 1; E. Mazar 1996: 101–102). It is possible, I believe, they were connected with the deceased’s role on earth. The women drummer figurines from the “Tomb of the Horsemen” from Achzib were found alongside various other objects, including figurines of horsemen. These latter represent equestrian archers, who were placed in the tombs as guardians, or the vocation of one of the deceased, which he would pursue in the afterlife (E. Mazar 1996: 100). It is also conceivable that the juxtaposition of the women drummers and horsemen denotes the “victory song” tradition of women who go forth singing, drumming, and dancing to greet the warriors returning from battle. This tradition, customary in the Kingdom of Israel, could have reached the country’s northern coast, even though Phoenician culture was dominant there. I have already noted the ramified contacts and reciprocal influence between Israel and the Phoenicians. Another possibility is that the women drummer figurines were in the possession of the deceased, and symbolised

her role as a drummer in life, although there are still no studies in support of this conjecture.

8.4. Hybrid Figurines (Type C)

Most of the figurines of this group lack a clear archaeological context. This impedes their interpretation, which mainly relies upon iconographical analysis. Only a few derive from reliable archaeological settings, such as tombs, public buildings, and possibly houses.

The hybrid group exhibits characteristics of both former types, and is thematically linked to both, even though, artistically speaking, it is closer to Type B. However, in contrast to the composite technique and substantial outlay of labour apparent in the Phoenician figurines, the present group is characterised by relative simplicity. The figurines were mainly hand-made, and there is no uniformity in modelling or manufacture. They were apparently produced by individuals or local artisans, as opposed to central workshops. And in addition to the simplicity of the figures – usually devoid of decoration in dress or jewellery – most evidently represent women of humble social standing.

In view of the features I have cited, it seems that these figurines convey the diversity of meanings attached to the tradition of women drummers in Israel. They are a local and singular creation which draws inspiration from different sources, and conceivably reflect both the popular-secular and religious aspects of drumming.

In reflecting the “victory song” tradition of the women of Israel, they express the popular (folk) aspect of drumming. Their participation in the victory celebrations, involving song, drumming, and dance, and their activity within the framework of a female group, were meaningful for the status of women in society and contributed to their sense of indispensability and power. The figurines portraying this tradition also served as means to convey a message to those women who, in their daily lives, were in need of prompting and encouragement.

Nevertheless, some of these figurines have characteristics thematically similar to those of the plaque figurines (Type A). The figure with an ornament on her brow from Samaria is exceptional in being adorned with jewellery, which was customary in the plaque figurines. The figurine from ‘Ain Jenin depicting a naked, bisexual figure resembles the plaque figurine from Tel ‘Ira⁴⁷. I have construed these figures as mortal (not divine) hermaphrodites who participated in the cult (4.1.2). Another link to the cult is afforded by this figurine’s singular modelling – it bears an oil-lamp on its head. It is

47 The connexion between the bisexual figurine from ‘Ain Jenin and the plaque figurine from Tel ‘Ira was initially drawn by Pirhiya Beck (1990). In the present study, the identity of these figures is considered in 4.1.2.

conceivable that this lamp, evidently some kind of hat or crown, served in various events or ceremonies. It thus seems to me that these figurines, like the plaque figurines, represent the religious facet of drumming. Owing to their crude and simple modelling, they presumably served in the framework of a domestic cult. The theme of the woman or hermaphrodite with a drum associates them with fertility, which likewise associates them with the plaque figurines (8.2.)

In view of their characteristics, the diverse contexts and assemblages in which they were found, their treatment, and the patterns of damage and disposal, it seems that one can situate these figurines within the gamut between the sacred and secular. In his study of Neolithic religion, Sherratt (1991: 52) defines this state as “profane”, i.e., it designates an entity forming part of the sacred, but which has been transferred from its original context to daily life, without becoming integral to it, while retaining something of its former aura.

8.5. Drummer Figurines and the Status of Women

Having considered the function and import of the drummer figurines, I should like to try to assess the collective significance of the full assemblage. All the figurines have a common thematic denominator: they all depict women drummers. They exhibit artistic disparities and illustrate different contexts in which women played upon drums, but, in appraising their gender significance, it is possible to relate to all of them together.

In Ch. 7, I examined the diverse traditions of women drummers and their gender significance. I argued that these traditions reveal tension between the gender ideology of the folk and that of the élite, whereby the latter sought to impose its own, male-oriented version. As I have shown, the figurines representing the popular traditions also reflected the people’s outlook and ideology.

With the emergence and crystallisation of the state in Israel, the bid to establish the ideology of the élite in both the socio-economic and religious spheres evidently aroused opposition on the part of the populace. This is exemplified by the figurines. If the process of ideological penetration, with its gender implications, had proceeded more smoothly, one would expect that the figurine types would have adapted accordingly, both in terms of their themes and number over the course of the period. Archaeological studies in Greece (Langdon 1999) and in Mexico (Brumfiel 1996) have shown that in countries where the process of state formation peaked and the élite succeeded in establishing its ideology (with its implications for gender), a change occurred in the representation of women in official art.

In the 8th century BCE, the emergence of complex state societies in Greece brought about changes in the social functions of men and women

respectively, whereby those of the latter dwindled and became marginal. Correspondingly, the number of female figurines declined markedly, and those that have been found depict passive women, while the number of male figurines rose and depict a wide range of virile poses (Langdon 1999: 23–26).

In Mexico, the official art of the Aztec state represents women as defective or androgynous and subservient next to the men. The folk art, by contrast, shows women in a wide range of functions and activities, and they are often linked to procreation and fertility (Brumfiel 1996: 155–160).

A survey of the data from Israel shows that the various types of women drummer figurines appear throughout Iron Age II, without exhibiting notable changes in their areas of distribution or in numbers over its successive phases. In general, the clay figurines of women are far more abundant than those of men (Van der Toorn 2002). It is difficult to distinguish between official and popular art in Israel. However, as I have shown, the women drummer figurines appear in domestic and rural contexts, as well as in central sites in official settings, such as cultic and public structures. This generalisation supplements the specific interpretations of the function and significance of each of the figurine types considered separately. The following picture emerges from a synthesis of the data:

The women drummer figurines reflect the tension between the world-views of the ruling and subject classes in matters of society, belief, and cult, and stress the gender aspect of this confrontation. The figurines evidently give physical expression to the ideological resistance of the masses to the exclusion of women and goddesses from religious life and the gradual attrition in the standing of women as a result of the period's socio-economic changes. Although Israel became a developed state over the course of Iron Age II, it is possible that it was insufficiently centralised, and proved unable to impress its ideology on all the areas of its dominion and sectors of the populace. The figurines bear witness to its difficulties.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

Artefacts linked to drumming in Eretz-Israel, together with the biblical account, reveal a dichotomy between the musical traditions of women drummers and that of the Canaanite Orchestra, whose players were male.

The numerous depictions of drumming, including those in the Old Testament, indicate that the drum was a female instrument. One facet of drumming by women, very pronounced in the archaeological record, but totally ignored by Scripture, was the fertility cult. It was apparently accepted by official religion for a time, but was gradually thrust aside, while still enjoying an honourable position in the domestic fertility cult. Owing to the importance of the drum in such contexts, it was principally employed in rites connected with the life-cycle and events of significance to women. These transpired mainly within their social domain, namely, the household.

The second facet of the women drummer tradition is reflected in both the archaeological record and the Old Testament. Drumming in the framework of the "Victory Song" was a female tradition of popular (folk) character, which included drumming, song and dance. The performance of women drummers in the public arena was integrated into a series of events defined in advance by the ruling male élite. In actuality, these performances, which had official approval, transpired outside the cultic context, even if the victory celebrations had a certain religious dimension.

In contrast to the women drummers tradition, the Canaanite Orchestra was specifically cultic in its function, and it comprised a number of different instruments played exclusively by men. This is true of the Stand of the Musicians from Ashdod and of similar ensembles mentioned in the Old Testament. In the framework of the official cult, as fixed by the ruling élite, the drummer was male.

The differences between the women drummer tradition and that of the Canaanite Orchestra reflect social differences between male and female, public and domestic, official and unofficial. Against the background of the decline in the standing of women and their gradual exclusion from the official cult, drumming in the above-described settings reflected their subject position, but also forged meanings on other levels: among people who preferred the traditional cults over the new monotheism; in the women's private domain, where the drum was specifically linked to fertility rites; and in the public arena, where the women drummers ostensibly fulfilled the role

assigned to them by the official order, but whose performance blurred the gender boundaries between public/male and domestic/female, and gave the participants the means to achieve higher status and assert a degree of power, while transmitting their message to other women in their society.

The women drummer figurines with which this study is concerned are a material reflection of these musical traditions and their implications. The diverse functions these figurines performed stress and perpetuate in clay the significance of drumming – the tension between the official and popular ideologies, and the resistance of the subject classes, especially of women, to the élite's attempt to impose upon them new ideas and regulations. The extensive use of the figurines in the household cult was a form of compensation for the loss of the goddesses on the public level, and the concentration of women on private observance answered their needs after have been excluded from the public cult. Other women drummer figurines probably reflect the tradition of the Victory Song; they served as a palpable reminder of women's power and of their ability to act for social change.

Drumming and the figurines depicting it provide an expression – both in spirit and substance – of the daily tension between ideologies, lifestyles, and interests that shaped the lives of women in Iron Age Israel. We can hear their voices and the beat of their drums after thousands of years.

Abbreviations

AASOR – Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ADAJ – Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan
AJA – American Journal of Archaeology
AOS – American Oriental Society
BA – Biblical Archaeologist
BAR – Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR – Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
CAARI – Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute
ICTM – International Council of Traditional Music
IEJ – Israel Exploration Journal
JANES – Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society
JBL – Journal of Biblical Literature
JPOS – Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society
LA – Liber Annus
NEA – Near Eastern Archaeology
OBO – Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
PEQ – Palestine Exploration Quarterly
RB – Revue Biblique
SIMA – Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology
VT – Vetus Testamentum
ZAW – Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZDPV – Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palastina Vereins

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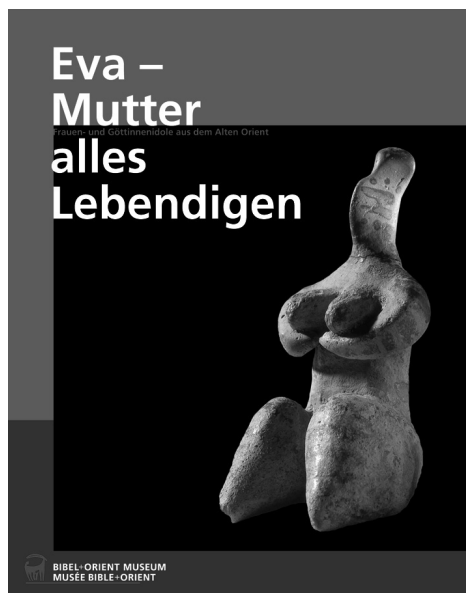
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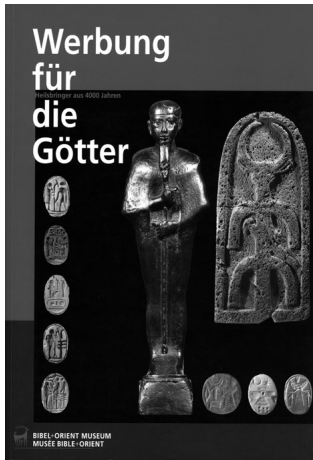
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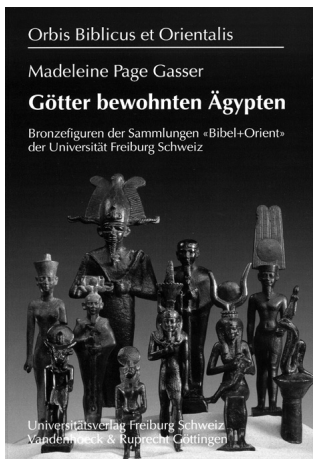
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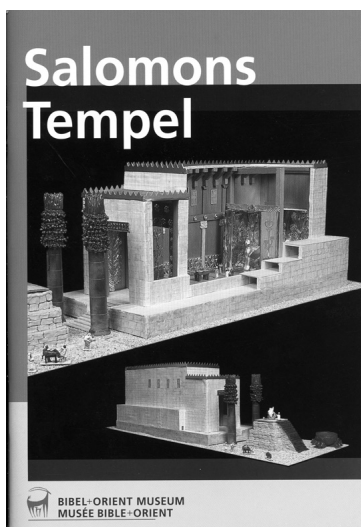
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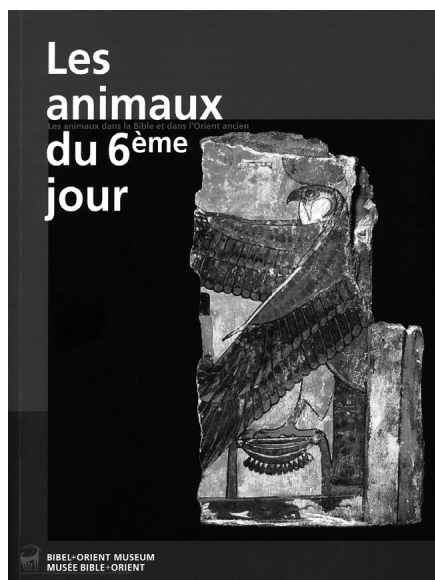


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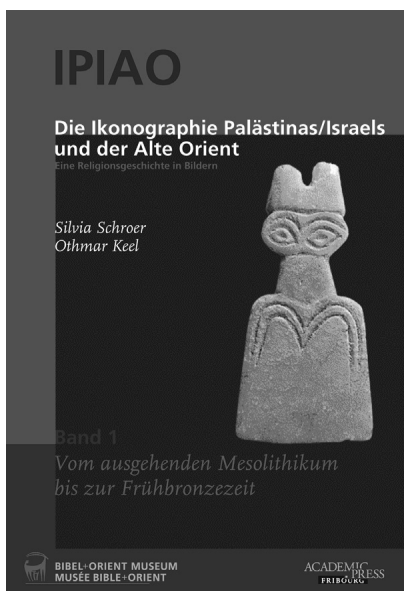
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Summary

The numerous depictions of drumming – mainly figurines of female drum players as well as the Old Testament – indicate that the drum was a feminine instrument. The present study considers the gender-related contexts of drumming in Iron Age II Israel.

Following a survey and analysis of the archaeological, biblical, and ethnographic data, the study ascertains a gender model characterizing this musical activity and its contexts in Israelite society.

One facet of drumming by women, very pronounced in the archaeological record, but totally ignored by Scripture, was the fertility cult. The second facet of the women drummer tradition is reflected in both the archaeological record and the Hebrew Bible. Drumming in the framework of the «Victory Song» was a female tradition of popular (folk) character, which included drumming, song and dance.

In contrast to the women drummers' tradition, the Canaanite Orchestra was specifically cultic in its function, and it comprised a number of different instruments, including the drum, played exclusively by men. The differences between the women drummers' traditions and that of the Canaanite Orchestra reflect social differences between male and female, public and domestic, official and unofficial.

The women drummer figurines with which this study is concerned are a material reflection of these musical traditions and their implications. The drumming traditions, and the figurines depicting them, provide an expression in spirit and substance, of the daily tension between ideologies, lifestyles, and interests that shaped the lives of women in Iron Age Israel.